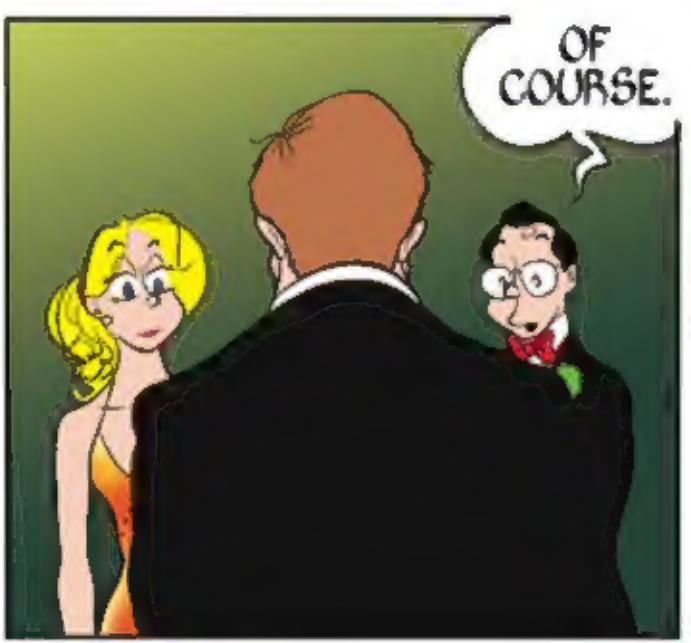
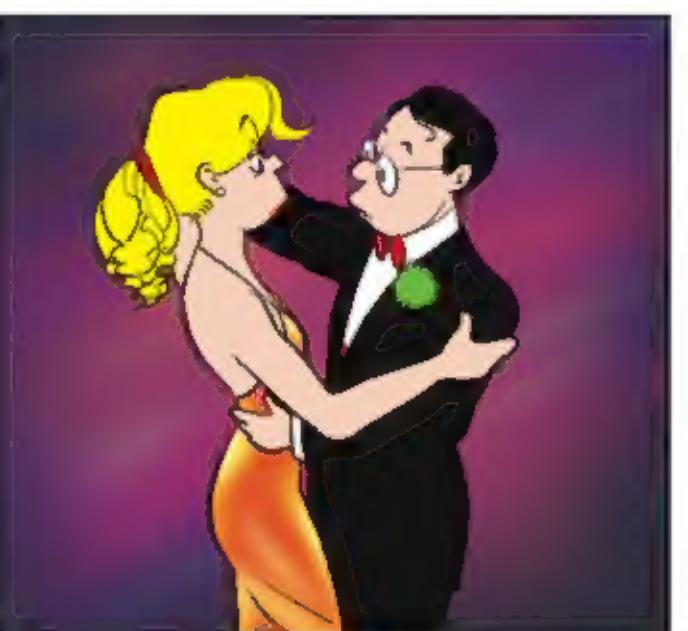
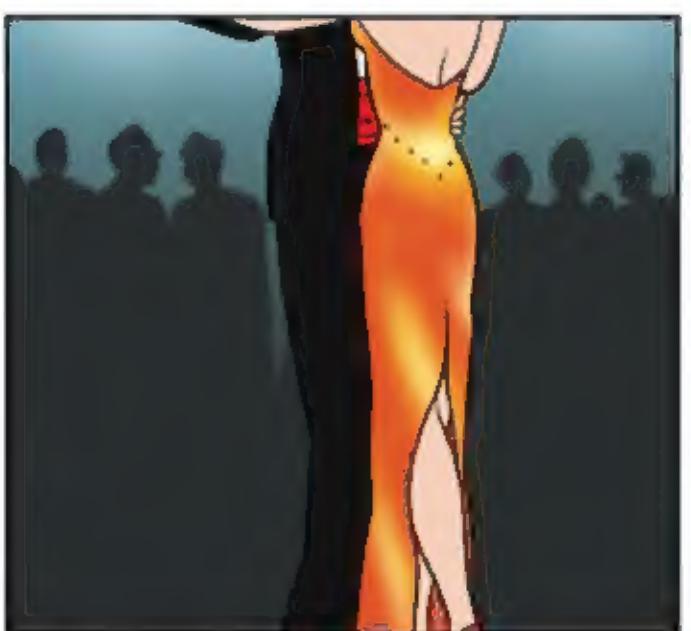
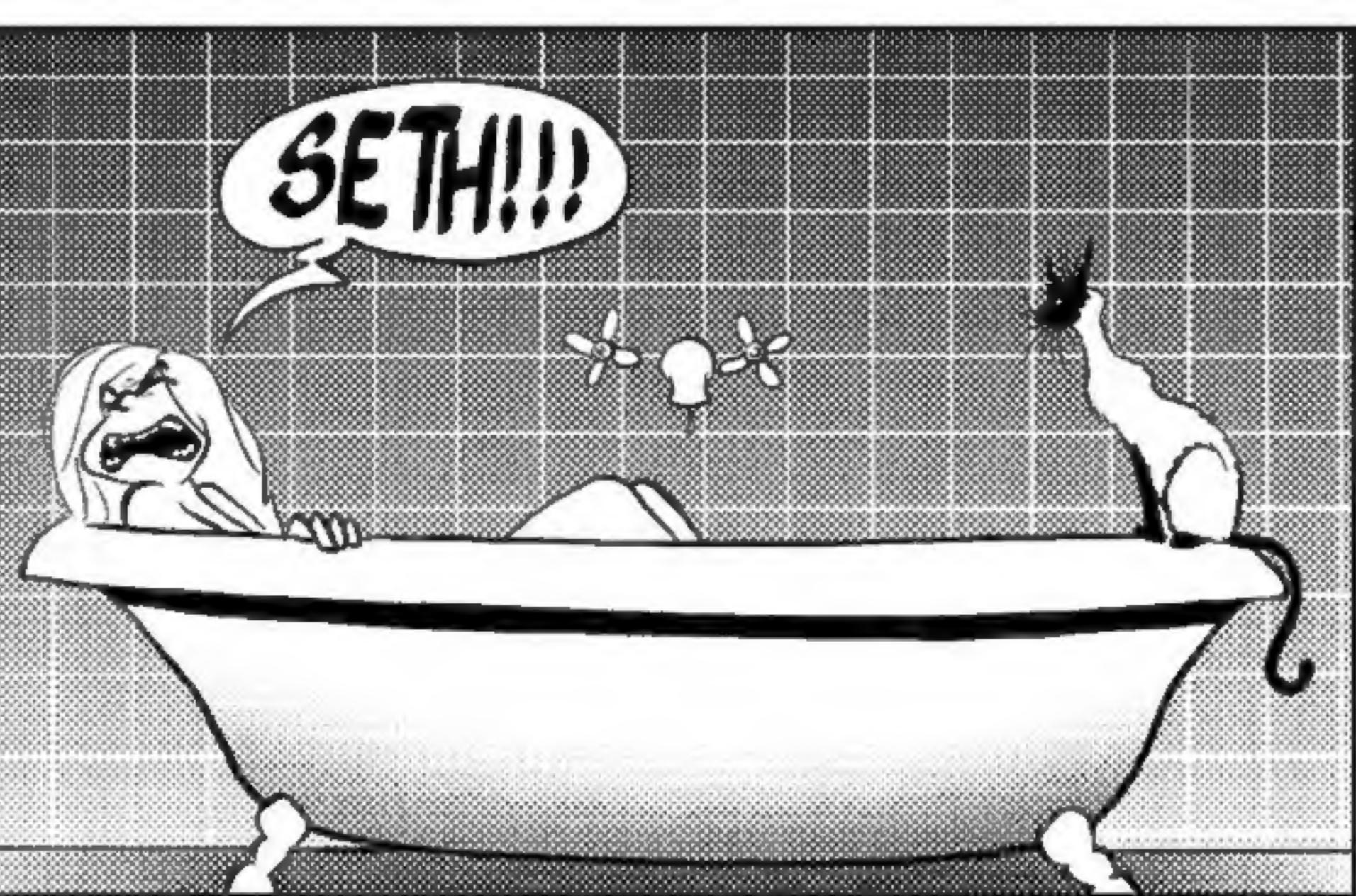


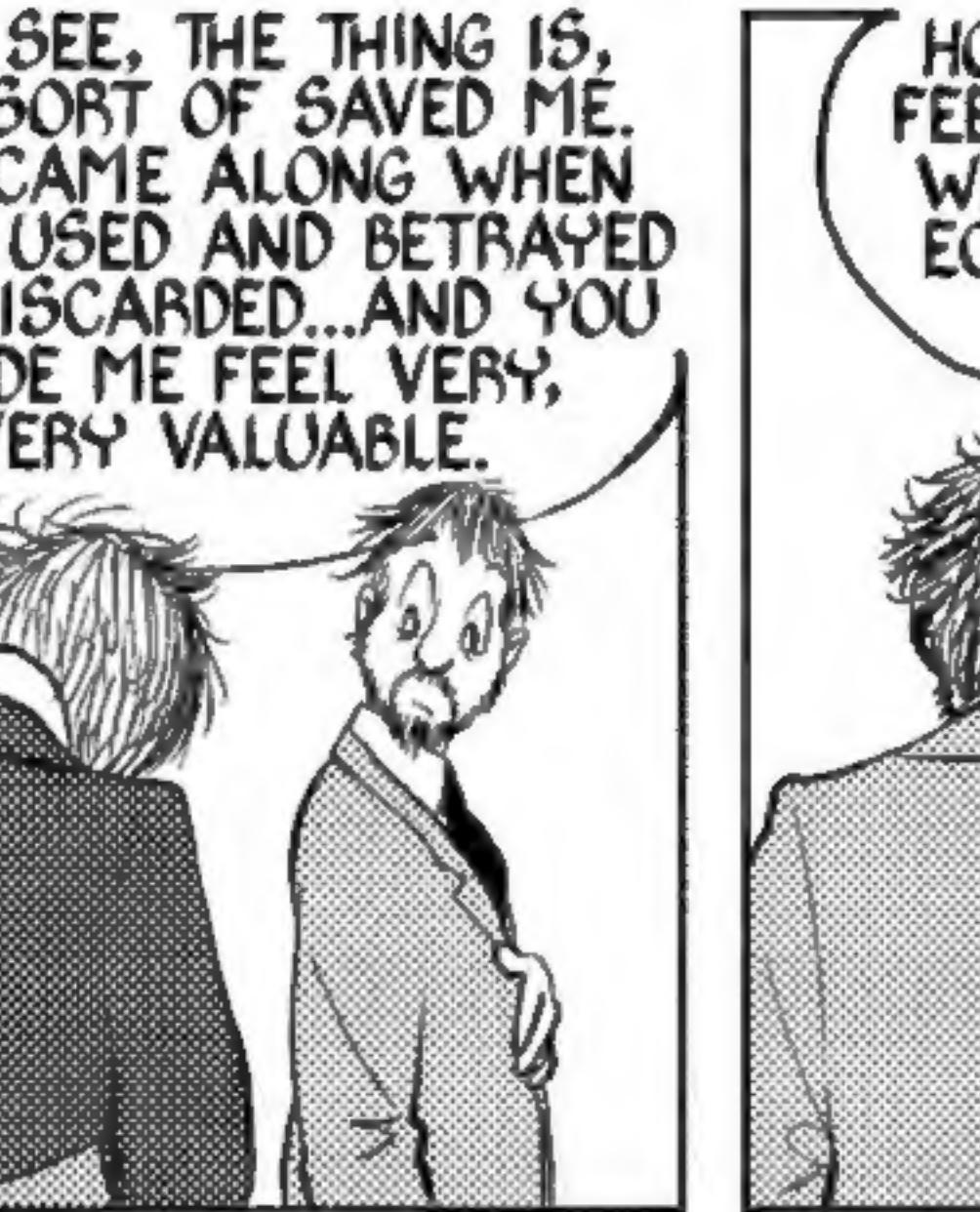
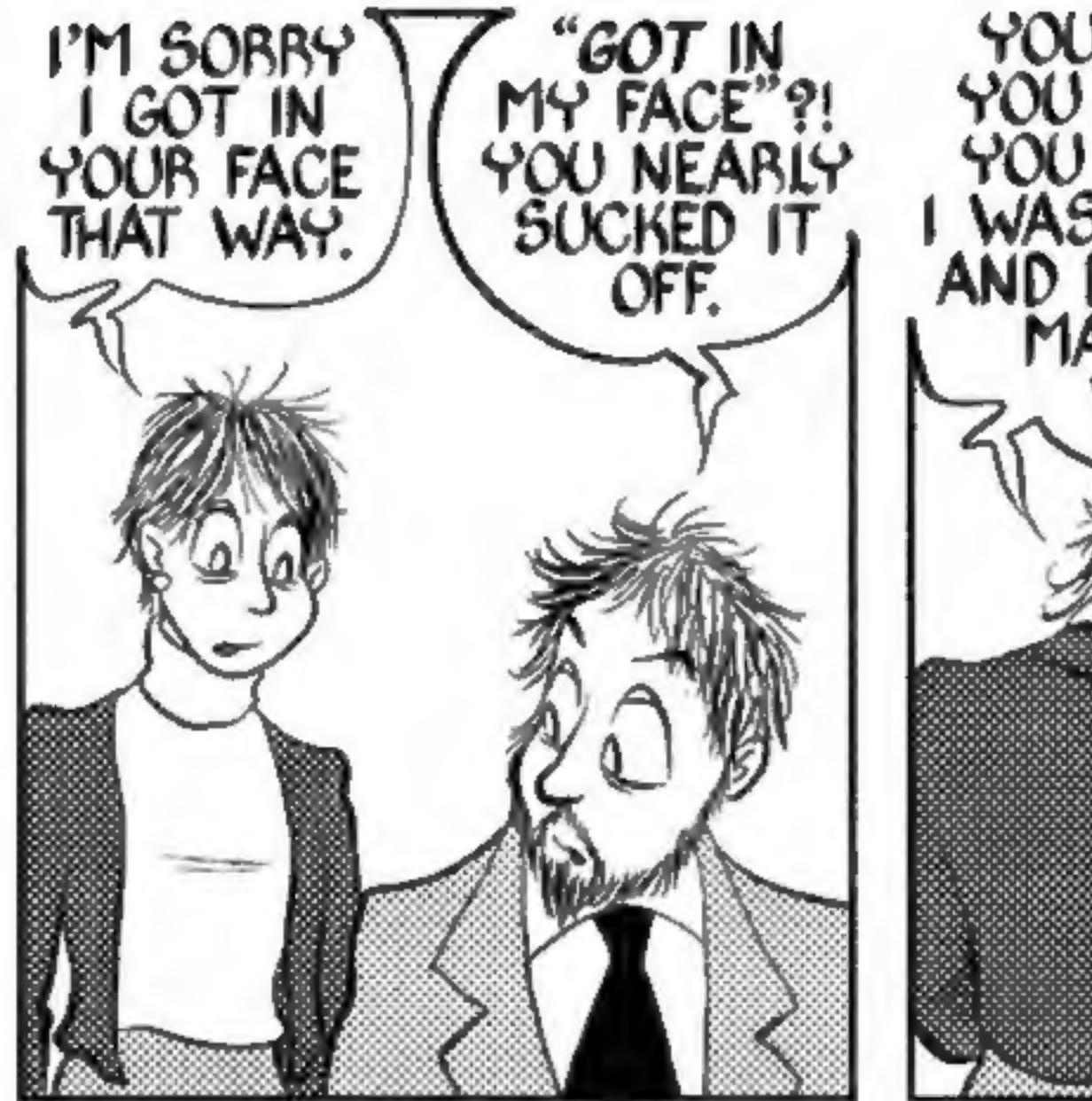


2006











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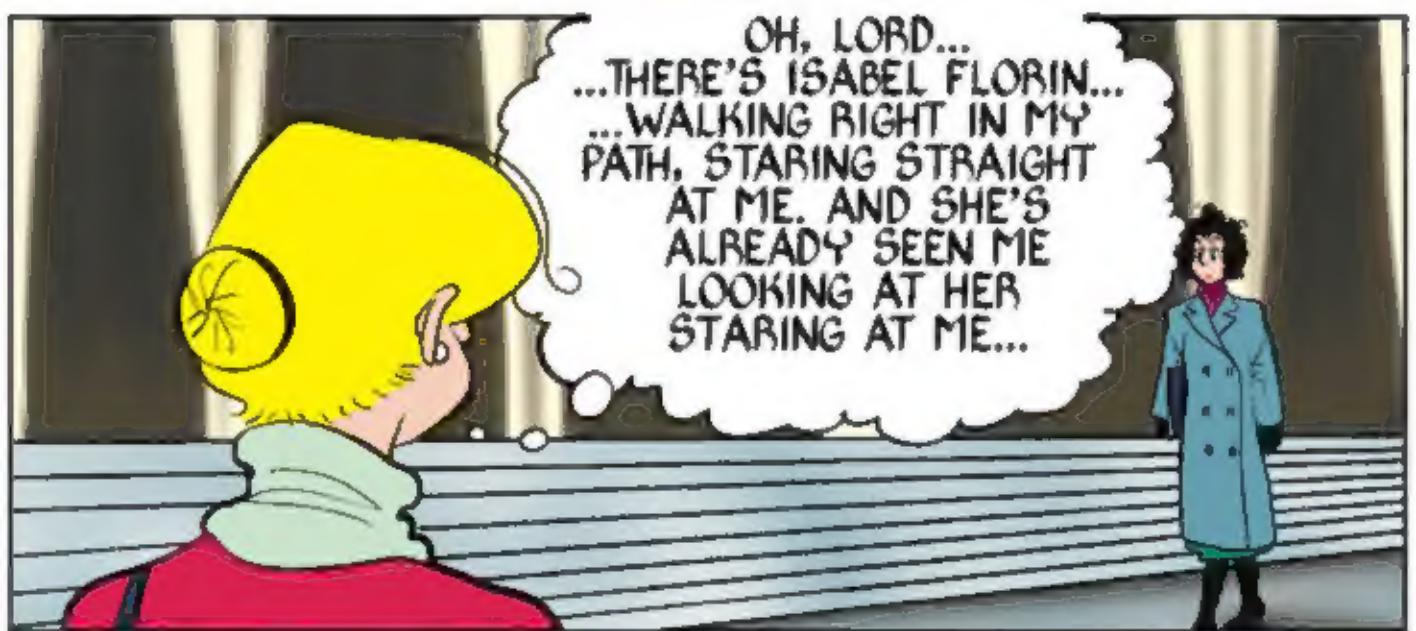
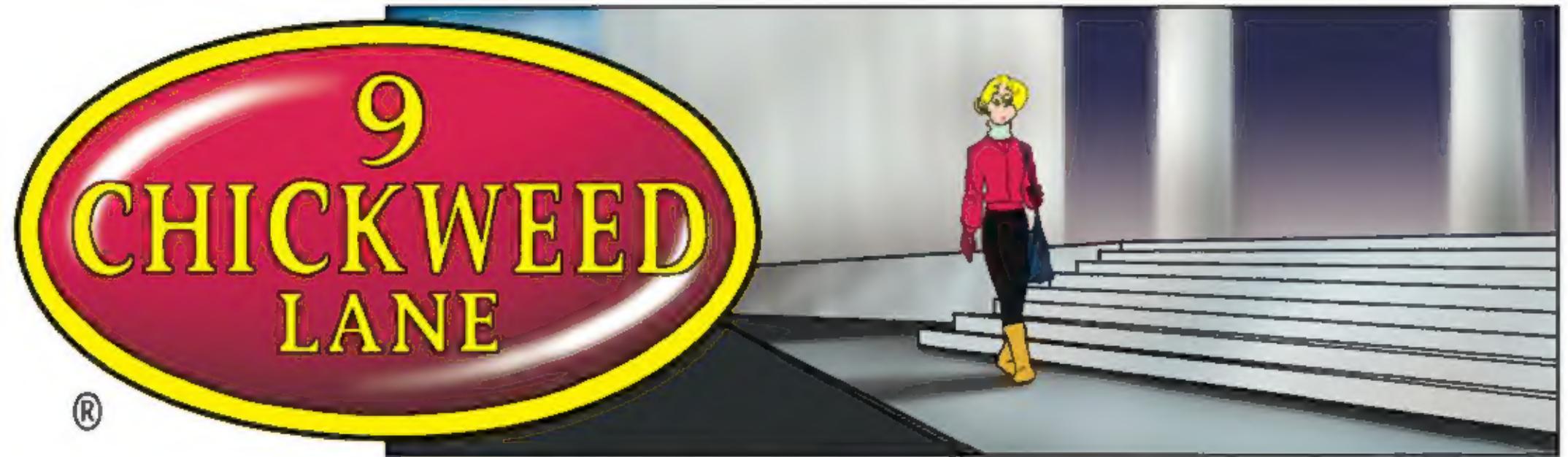


ISABEL, DO YOU
THINK YOU COULD
EVER FALL IN LOVE
WITH ME?



YOU MEAN, IF I WERE
DESPERATE, COMPLETELY AT
LOOSE ENDS, DWELLING ON
A BARREN LANDSCAPE WITH
NO ONE ELSE IN SIGHT,
DEVOID OF TASTE AND VERY
LIKELY NOT OF
SOUND MIND?







I'VE COME TO A MILESTONE
IN MY LIFE, AND YOU'RE
JUST BEING DIFFICULT, AS
IS YOUR WONT.

IT'S, "AS IS,
YOUR WANT."



NO...YOUR WANT IS
YOUR NEED, WHERE YOU'RE
FOUND LACKING...YOUR
WONT IS YOUR PREDI-
POSITION. WHAT YOU
WANT IS ANY SYMPATHY
FOR MY FEELINGS...
...AS ALWAYS.



IN OTHER WORDS...
...MY WANT IS
MY WONT,
AND MY
WONT IS
MY WANT.



STOP CLENCHING
YOUR BUTTOCKS, DEAR.
IT'S UNLADYLIKE,
AND YOU'RE MAKING
THE UPHOLSTERY
BOUNCE.



ALL I'M STRUGGLING TO SAY IS, ELLIOTT HAS BEEN ASKING ME TO MARRY HIM FOR YEARS, ON A WEEKLY BASIS. THE NEXT TIME HE ASKS, I'VE DECIDED TO SAY YES.



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WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME, I GUESS. I MEAN, FOR A MAN HIS AGE, HE'S STILL HOLDING UP...HE'S NOT TOO PAUNCHY, HIS EYES AREN'T ALL THAT CREEASED...



...AND WHEN HE STANDS UP, THE POPPING OF JOINTS LENDS A FESTIVE SOUND, SOMEWHAT REMINISCENT OF FIREWORKS IGNITING IN THE DISTANCE.



THAT SAID, OH...THEN LET US REVIEW BEFORE THE BIG EXAM. I WONDER WHY I DON'T CLAW THE TWEEDS RIGHT OFF HIS BACK.



Brooke



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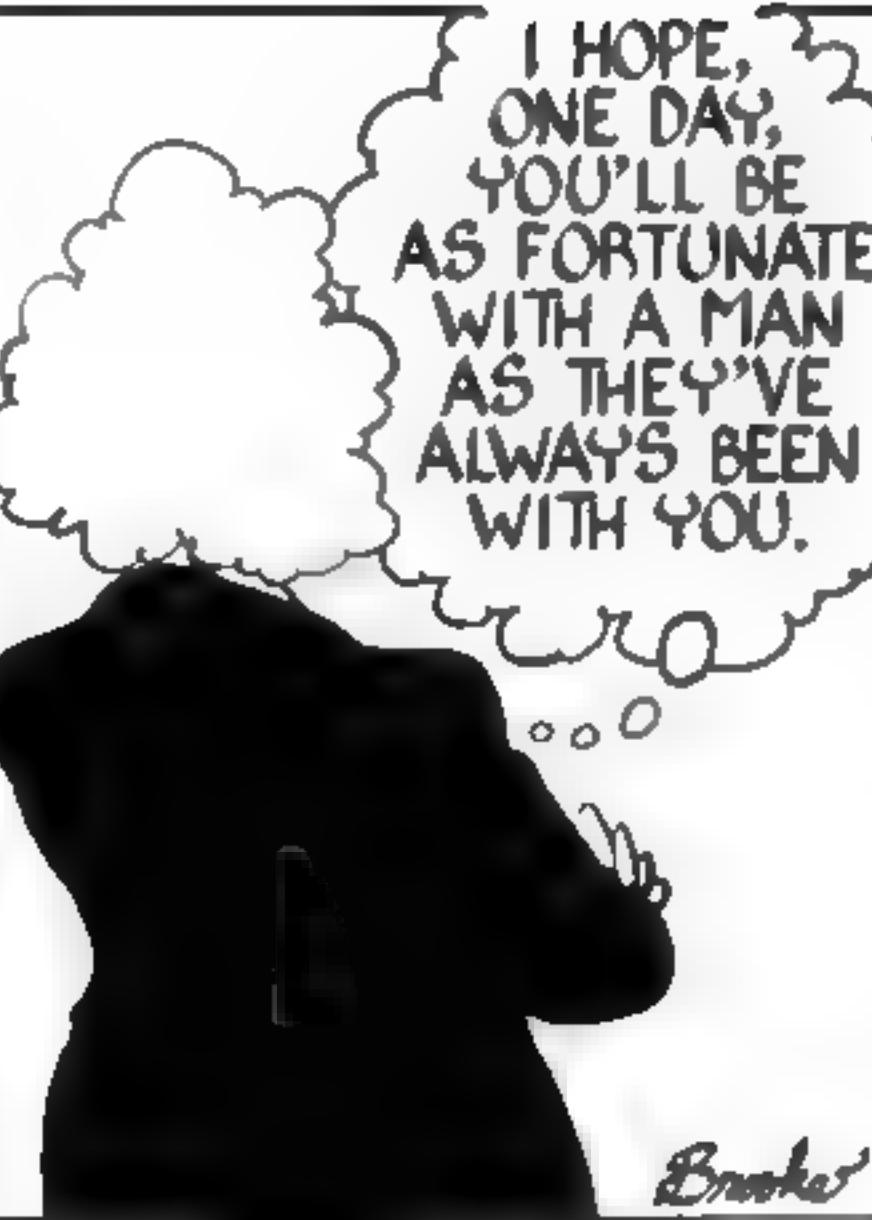
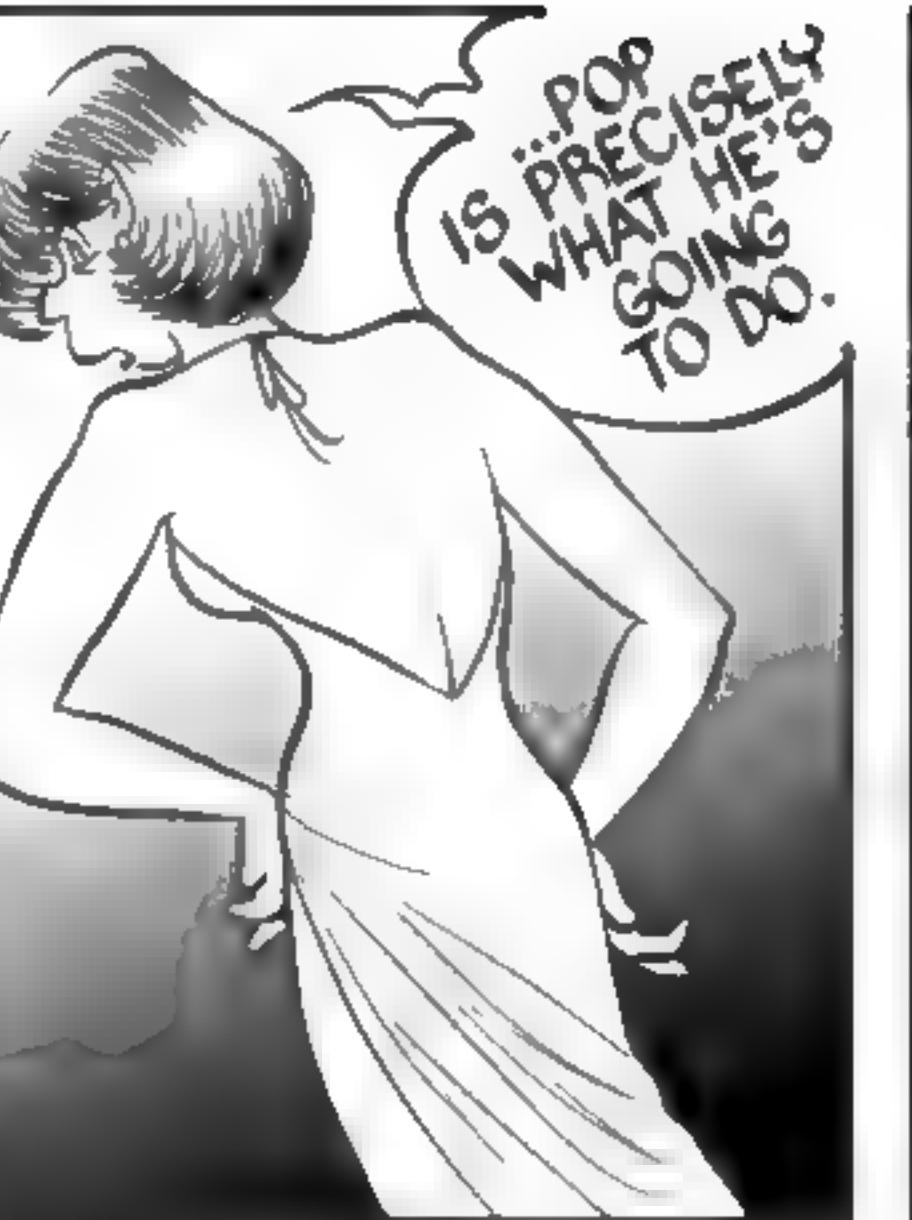
Brooke



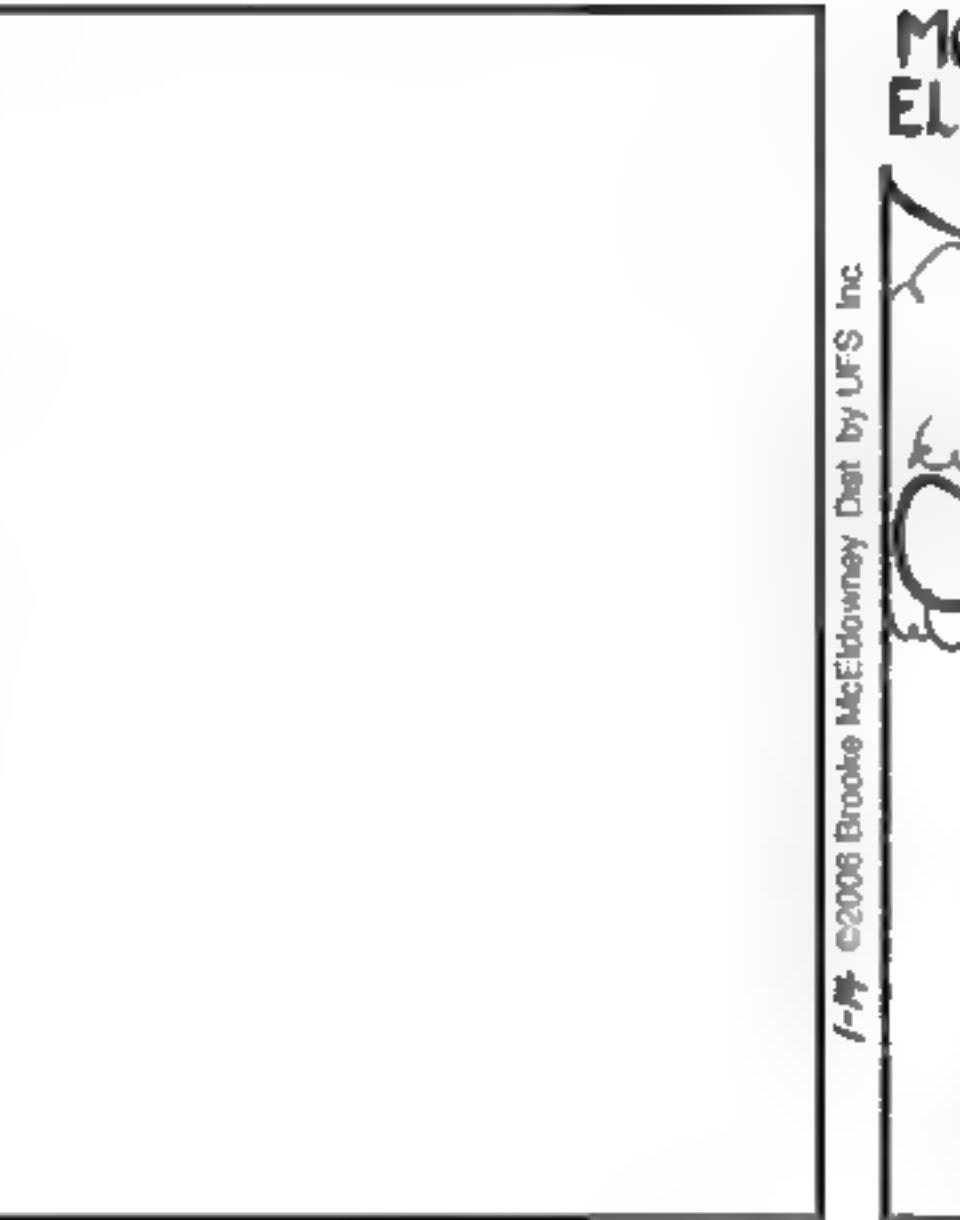
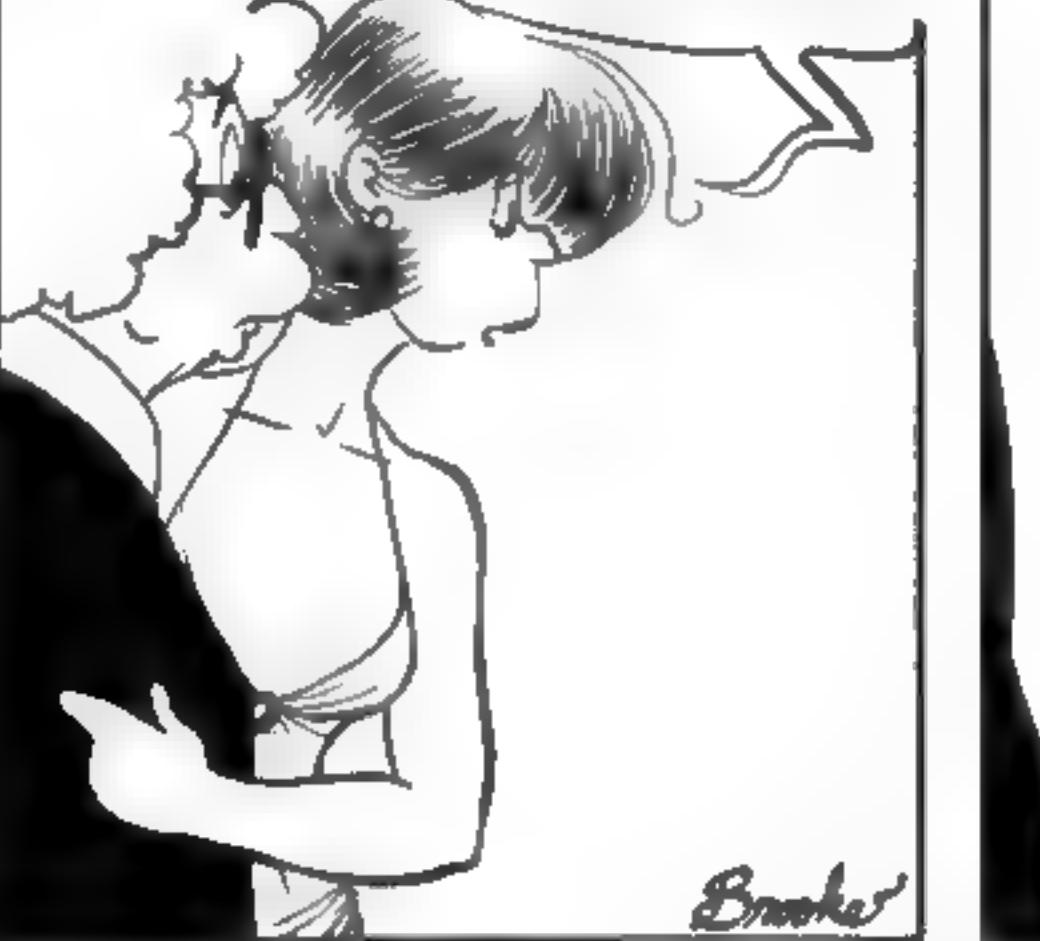
I'VE DECIDED
WHICH DRESS
I'M GOING TO
WEAR TONIGHT
WHEN ELLIOTT
POPS THE
QUESTION.

YOU'RE
CONFIDENT
HE'LL POP
IT?

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ELLIOTT'S AT THE DOOR.
HERE I GO, MOTHER.
...MAKE YOURSELF
SCARCE.



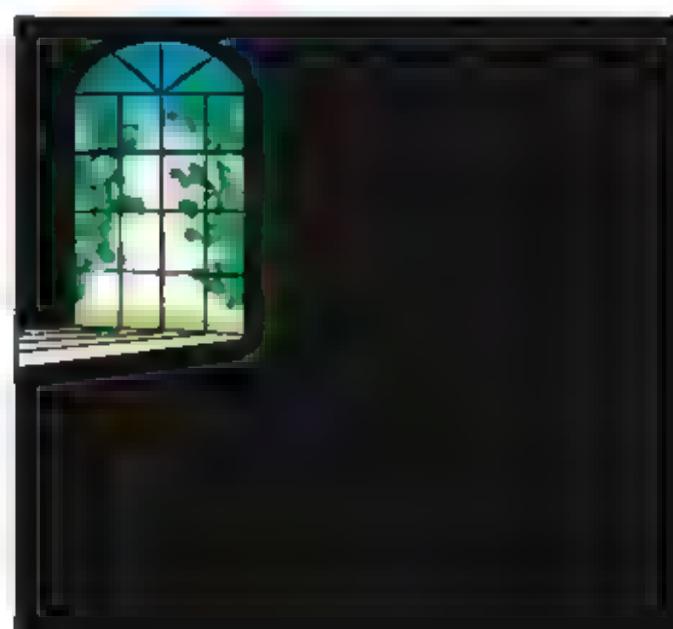
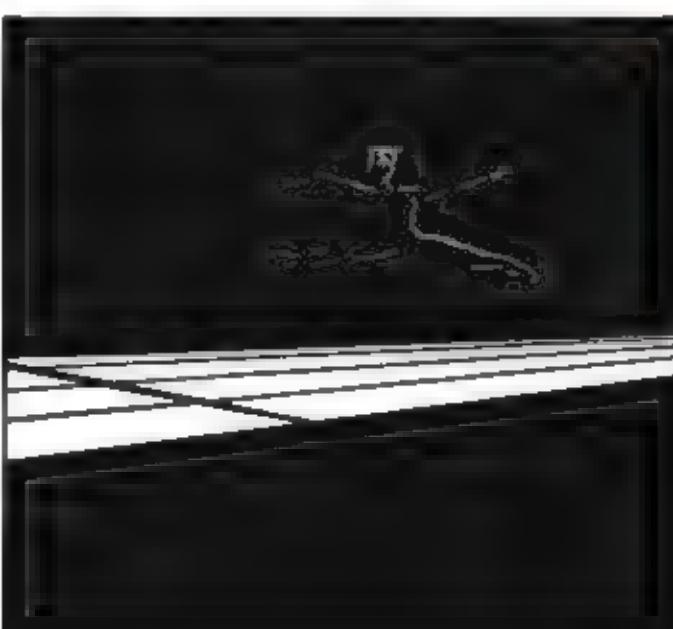
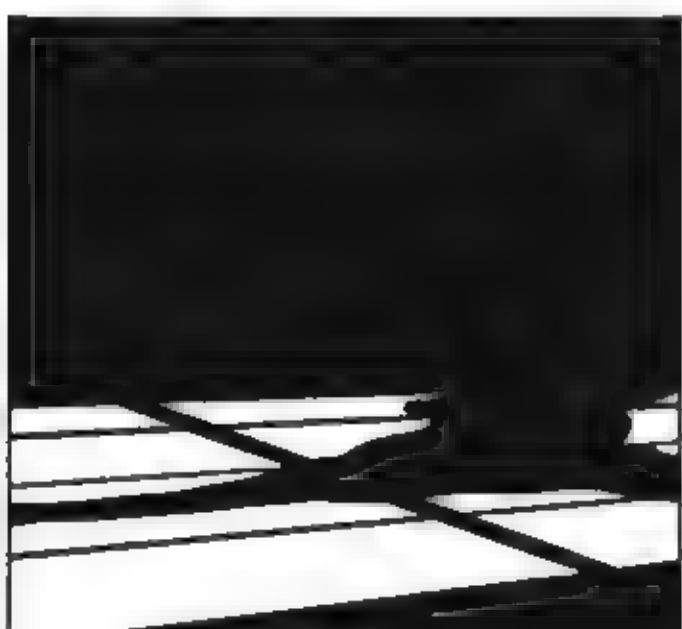
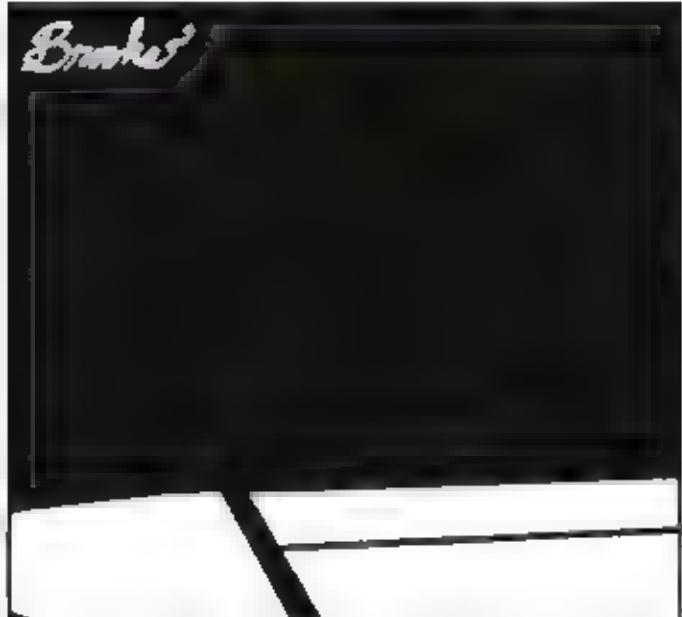
MOTHER, I NEED YOUR HELP.
ELLIOTT JUST INHALED HIS
COUGH DROP.

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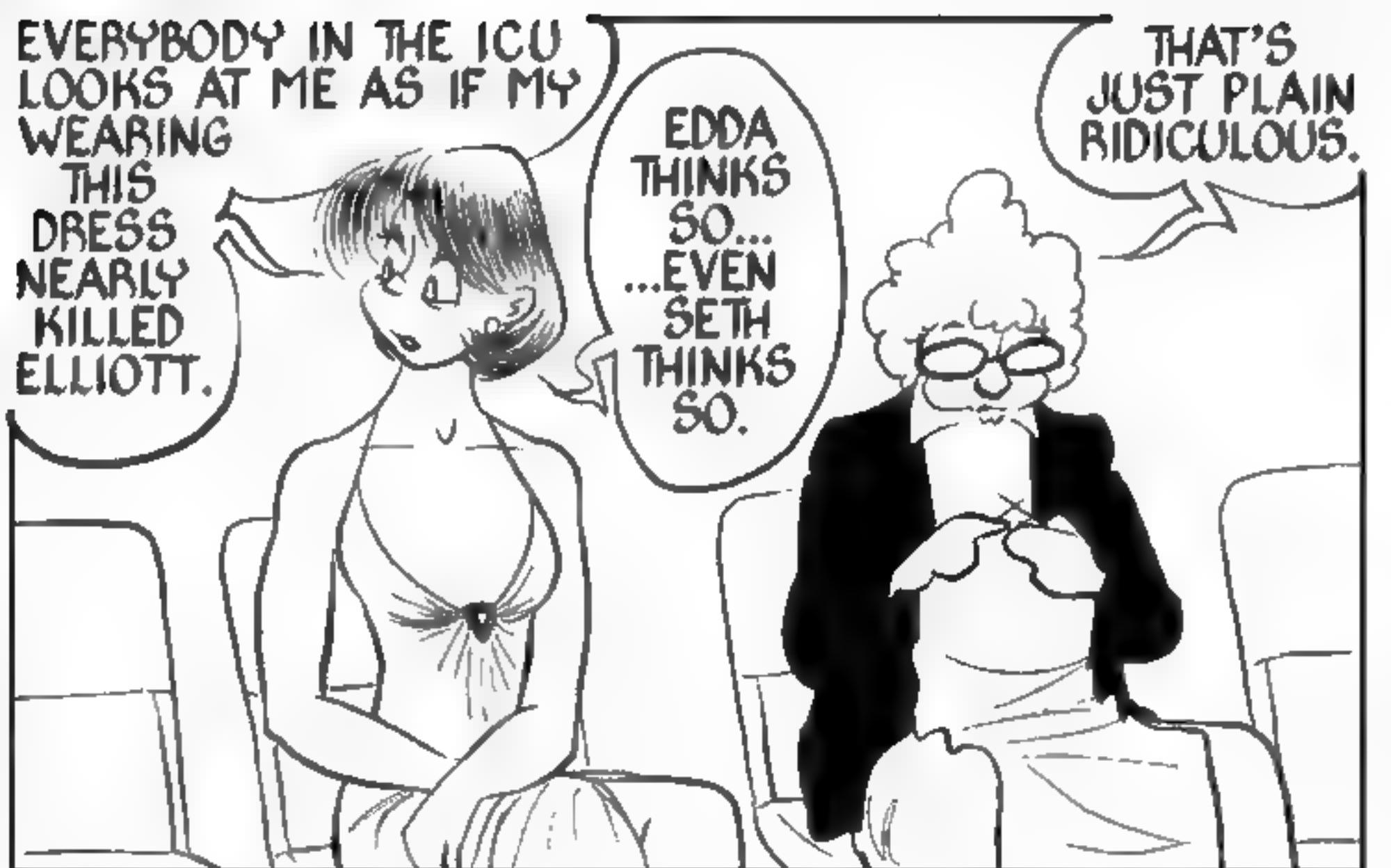
®













SO NOW MOM'S CONVINCED
SHE GAVE ELLIOTT CARDIAC
ARRHYTHMIA WHEN SHE
WOKE MY LITTLE SHRINK-
WRAP HALTER-TOP GOWN,
THEN ACCEPTED HIS
MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.



IF YOU WORE THAT GOWN
AND ACCEPTED ME, THEY'D
FIND MY FETID, PUTRESCENT
CORPSE RIGHT WHERE I
STOOD, WITH A BEAMING
SMILE WREATHED
ACROSS MY
OTHERWISE
ROTTING
FACE.



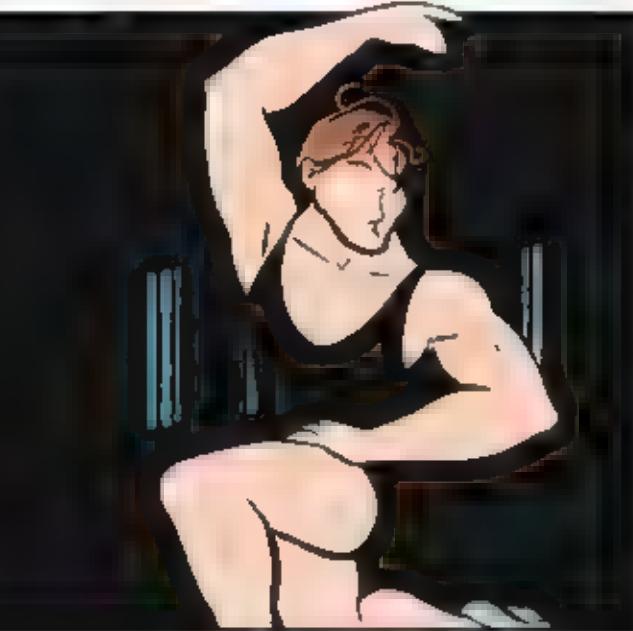
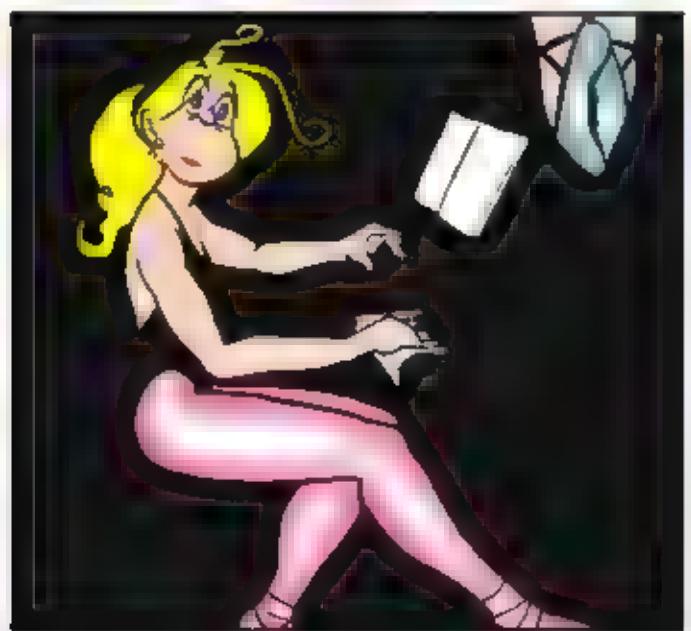
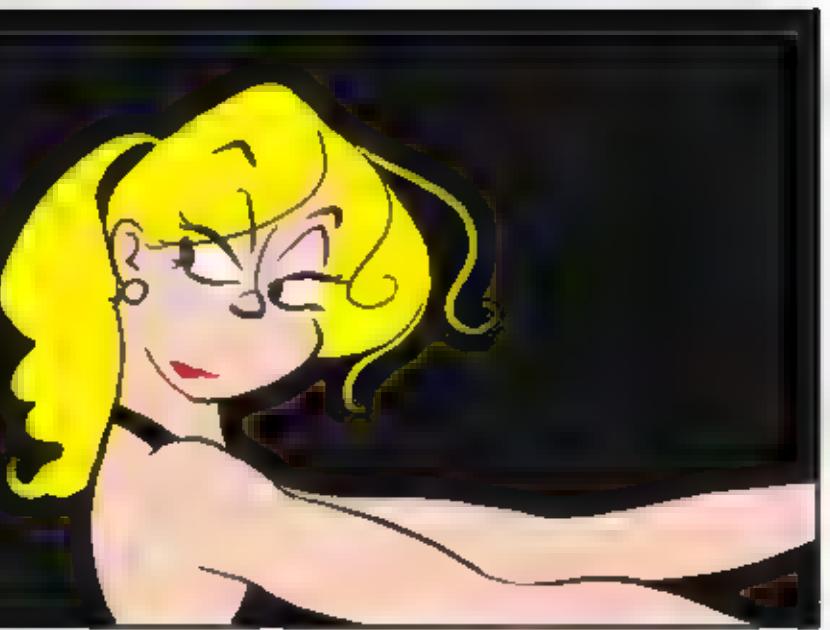
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YOU'RE ALWAYS
SO SWEET...
...IN A FAINTLY
NAUSEATING
WAY.



BOY, IF I HAD
A PENNY FOR
EVERY TIME
I'VE HEARD
THAT...

Brooke





DON'T GET ME WRONG...
...I'M SURE YOUR DRESS
AND THE WAY
YOU LOOKED
WOULD HAVE
GIVEN ME
PALPITATIONS...



WELL...
WHAT
YOU'RE SAYING
IS, I'M NOT AN
ARRHYTHMIA
SORT OF
PERSON.



MAYBE NOT ARRHYTHMIA,
BUT...I DON'T KNOW...
SHALLOW BREATHING,
GRAINY VISION?
...NOSE-
BLEED?



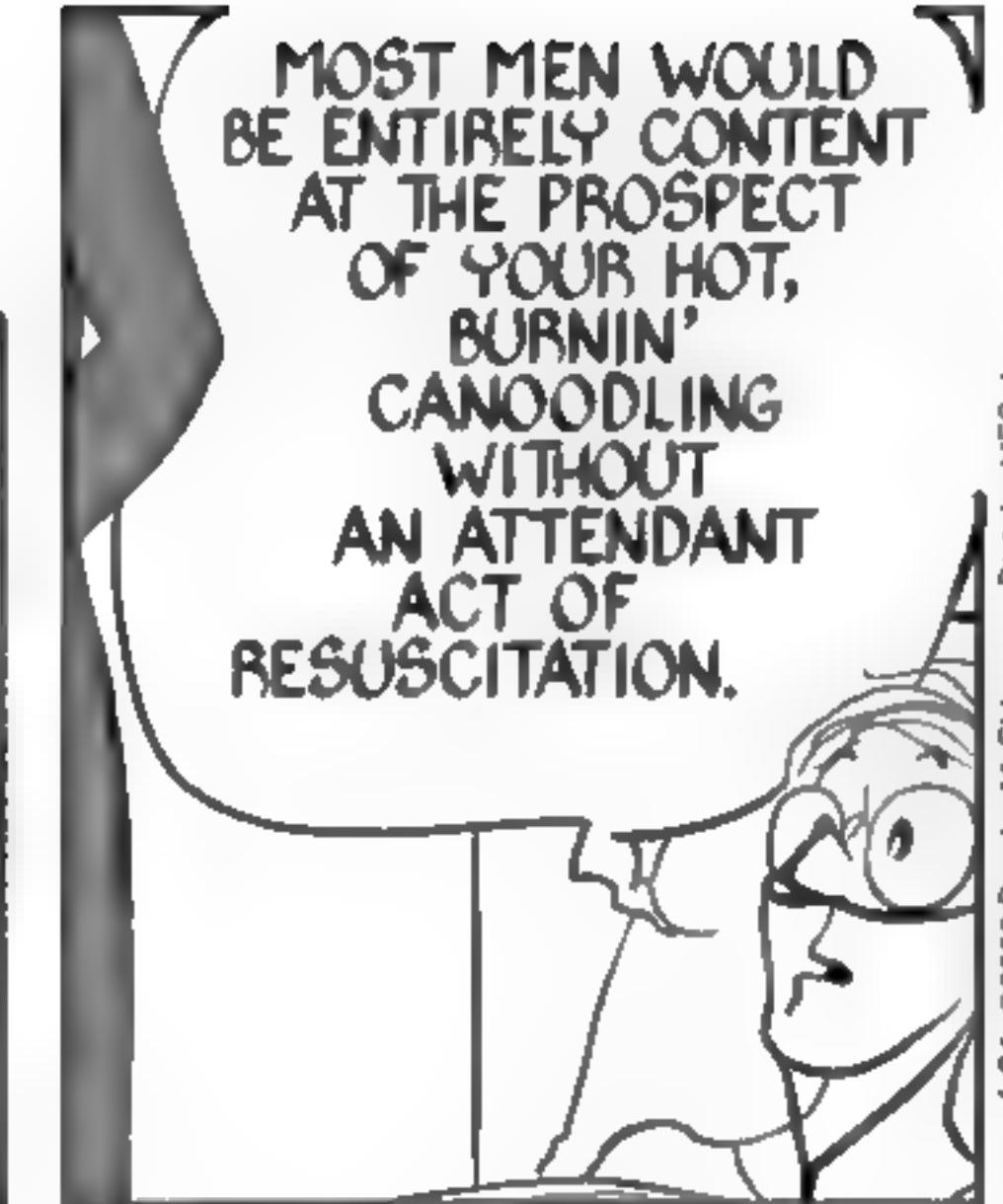
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....GINGIVITIS?
NOW YOU'RE
JUST SWEET-
TALKING ME.



Brooke







Brooke

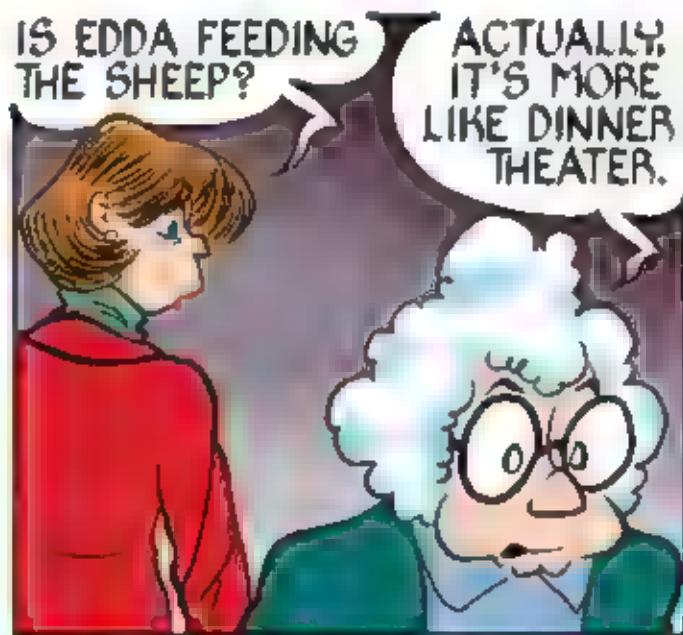
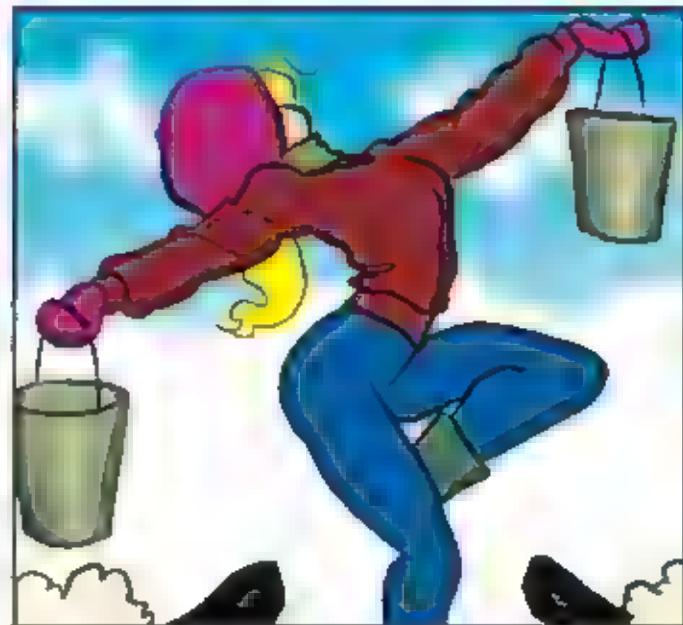
YOU OBVIOUSLY FIND THIS
WHOLE NOTION THAT YOU GAVE
ME ARRHYTHMIA PERSONALLY
GRATIFYING.

PEEP PEEP PEEP

BUT LET'S FACE IT, YOU
MET ME IN AN EYE-
BUGGING, SHRINK-WRAP
GOWN AND GAVE ME A
KISS. THE HEART STUFF
WAS JUST A
COINCIDENCE.

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INCIDENTALLY...
...WHAT DID YOU
MEAN BY
"YES"?



YOU MEAN, WHEN I MET YOU AT THE DOOR LAST NIGHT AND SAID "YES," YOU DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I MEANT?

WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

Peep Peep Peep

I MEANT YES, I'LL MARRY YOU.

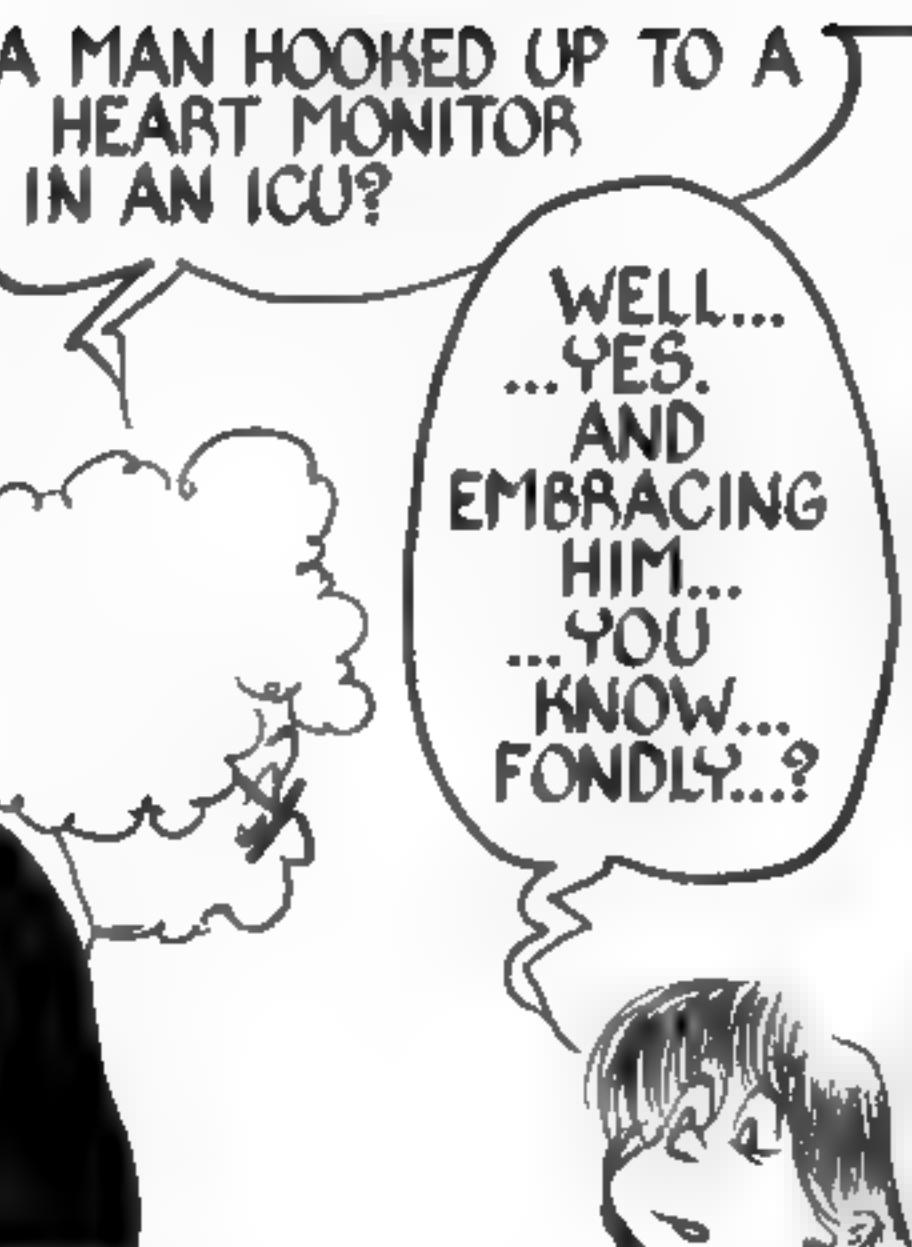
PEEP PEEP PEEP
PEEP

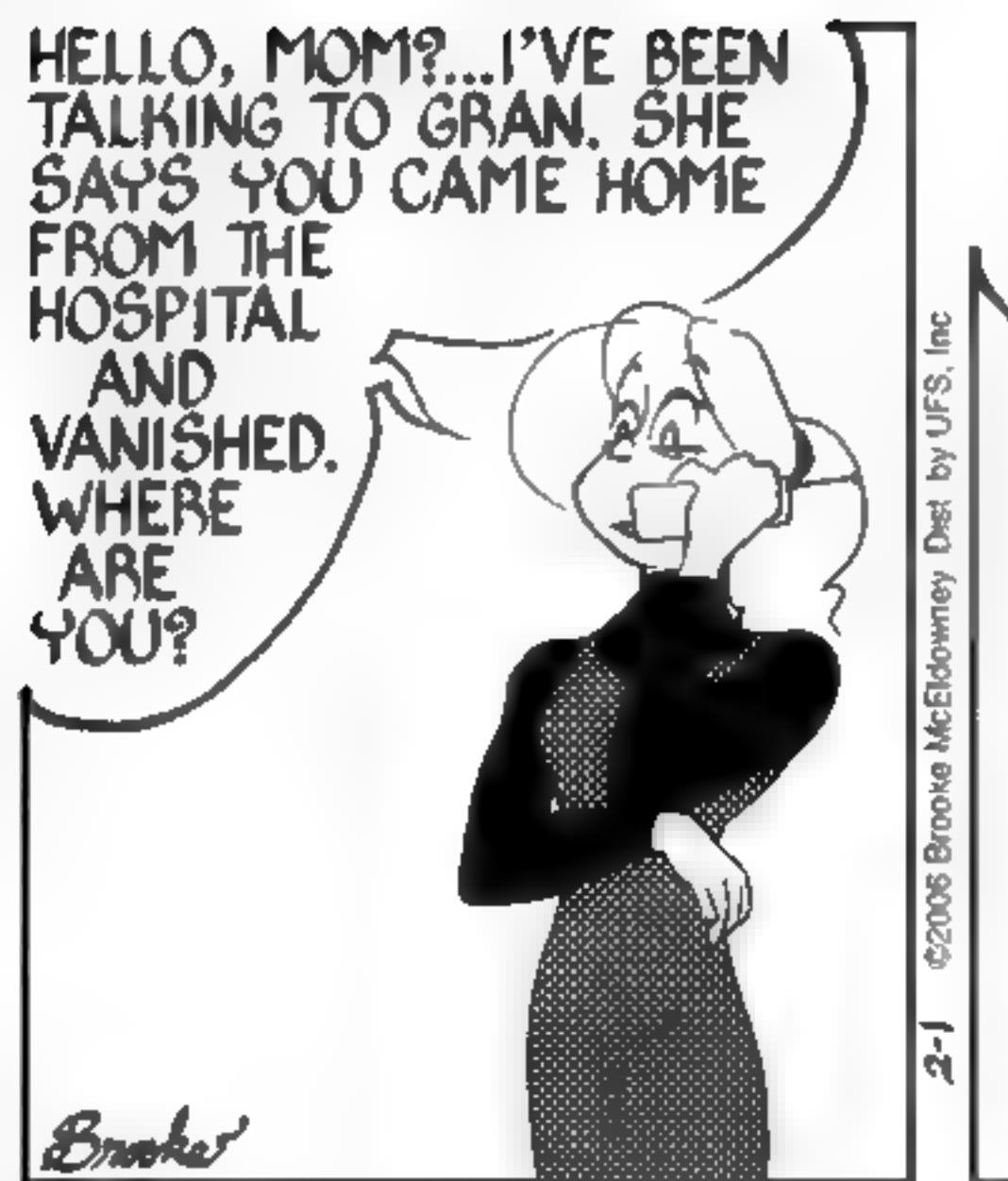
PEEP PEEP PEEP

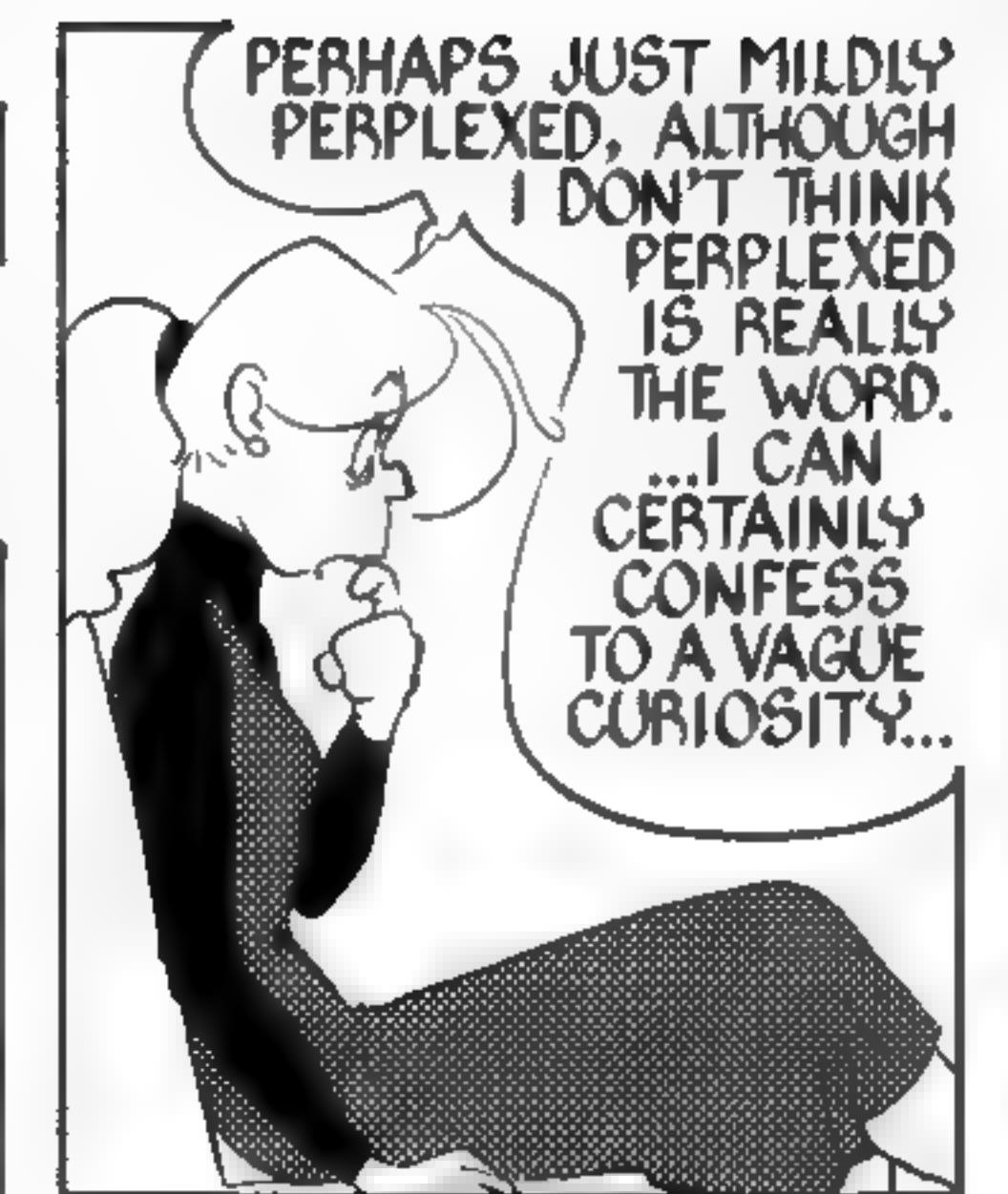
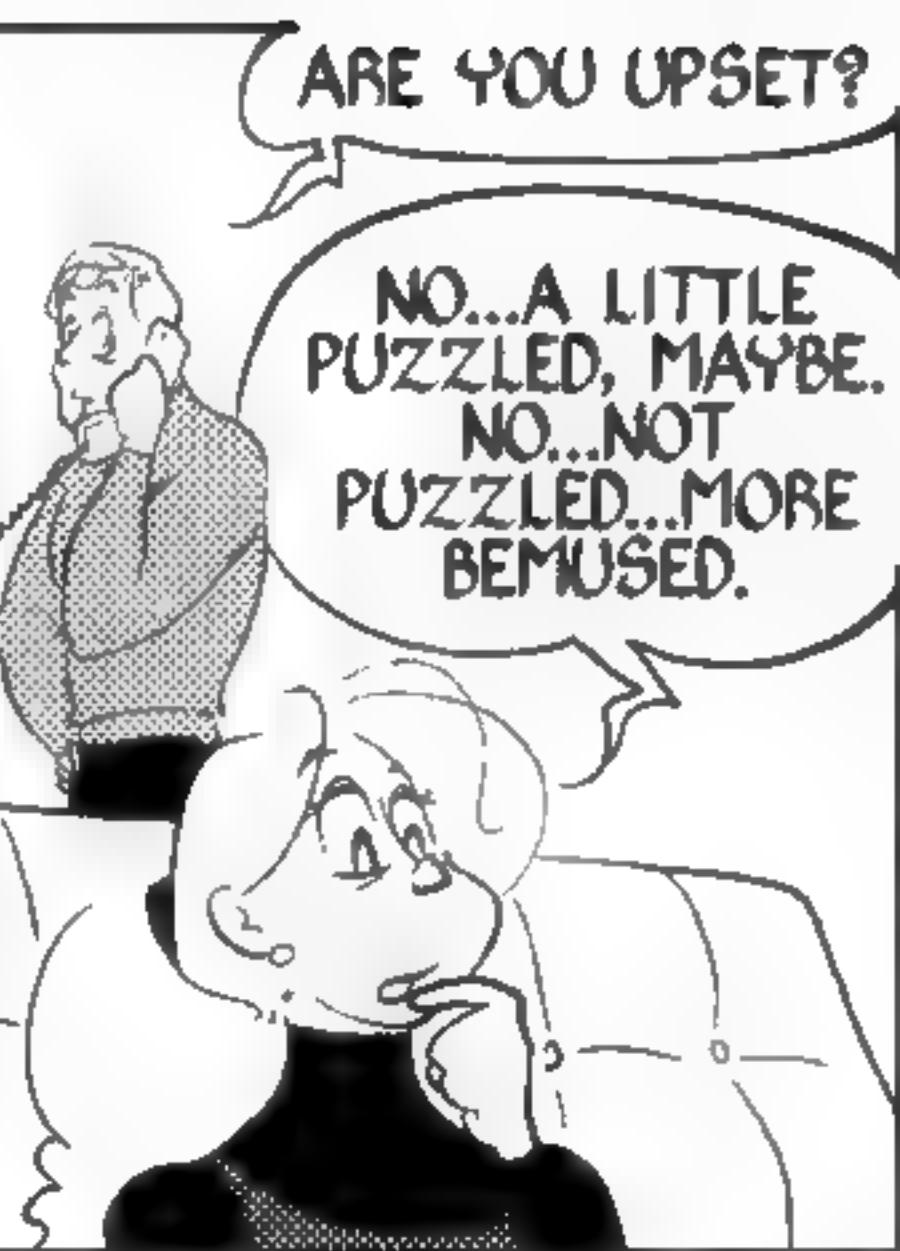
Brooke

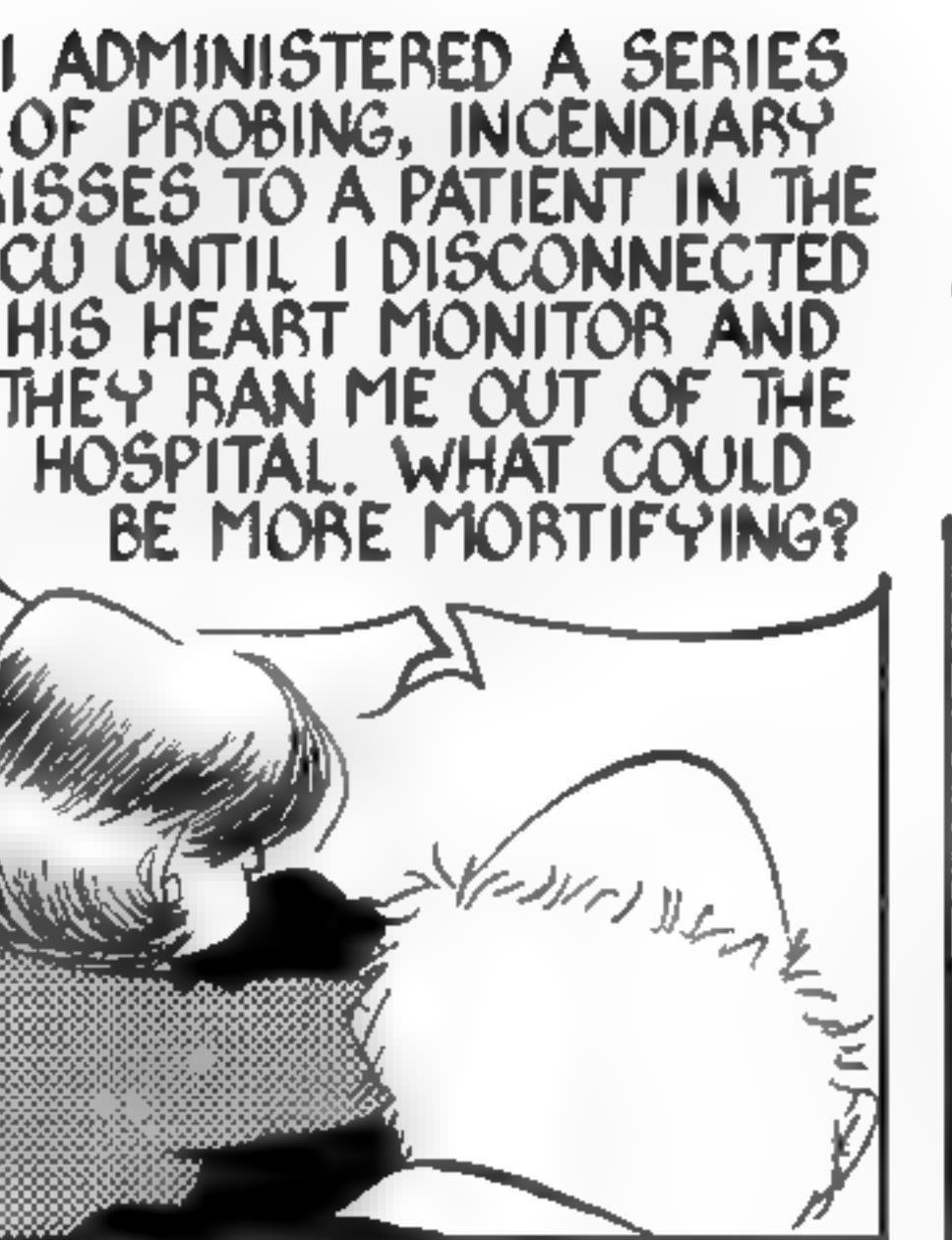
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PEEEEEE









YOU DON'T REALLY EXPECT ME TO
BELIEVE FOR AN INSTANT THAT MY
DERRIÈRE IS PROTRUDING THROUGH
A QUANTUM RIFT INTO THE DELTA
QUADRANT OF THE GALAXY.



TO RESIST
THE TRUTH
IS PERFECTLY
UNDERSTANDABLE.
WE ALL DO IT AT ONE
TIME OR ANOTHER.
...BUT EVENTUALLY
YOU WON'T BE ABLE
TO IGNORE THE
DRAFT.

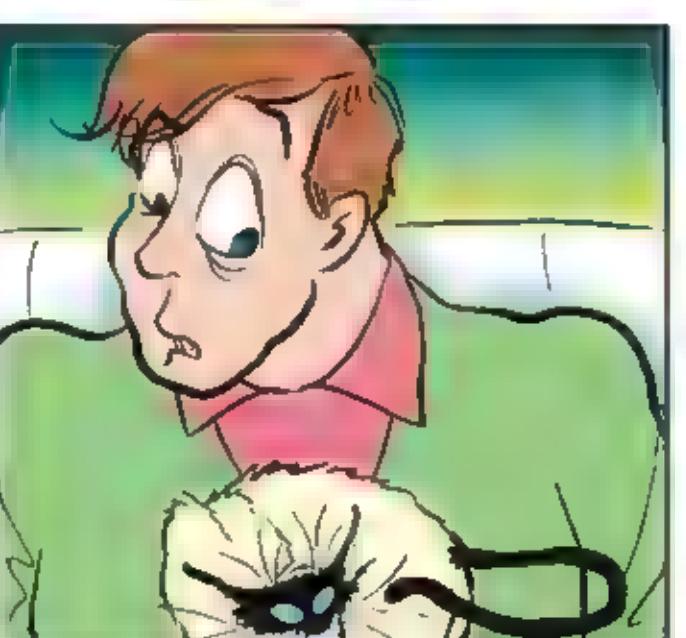
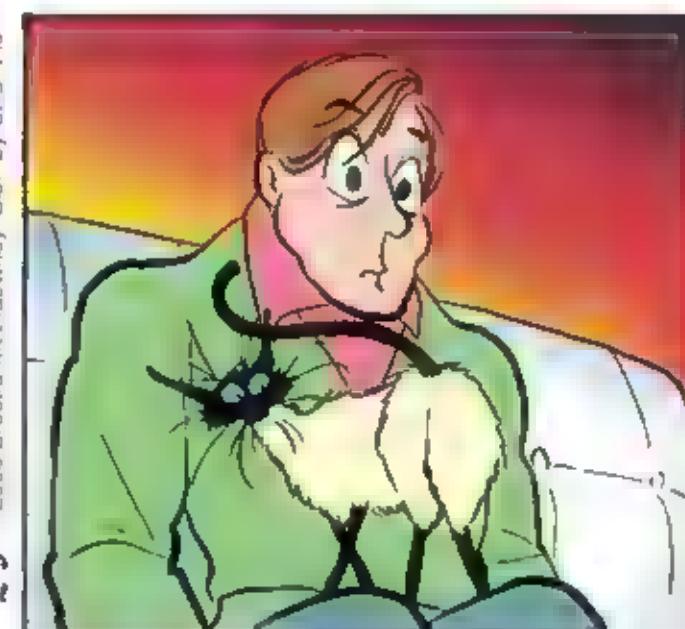
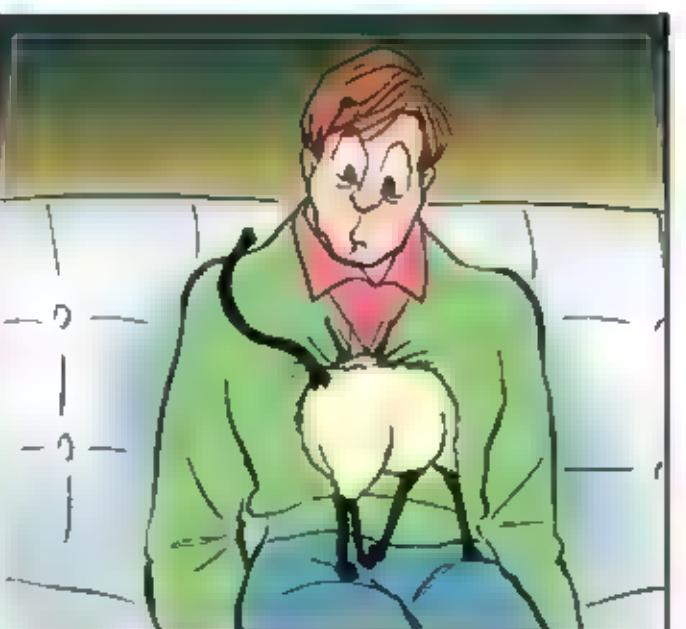
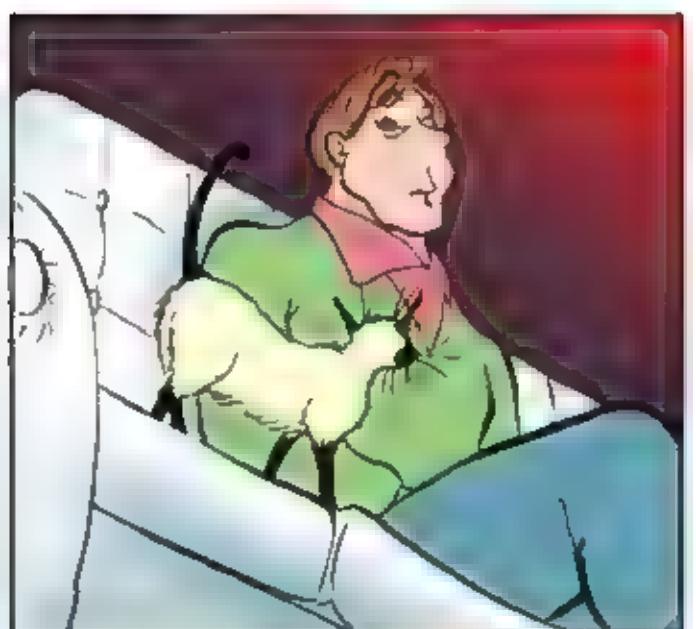
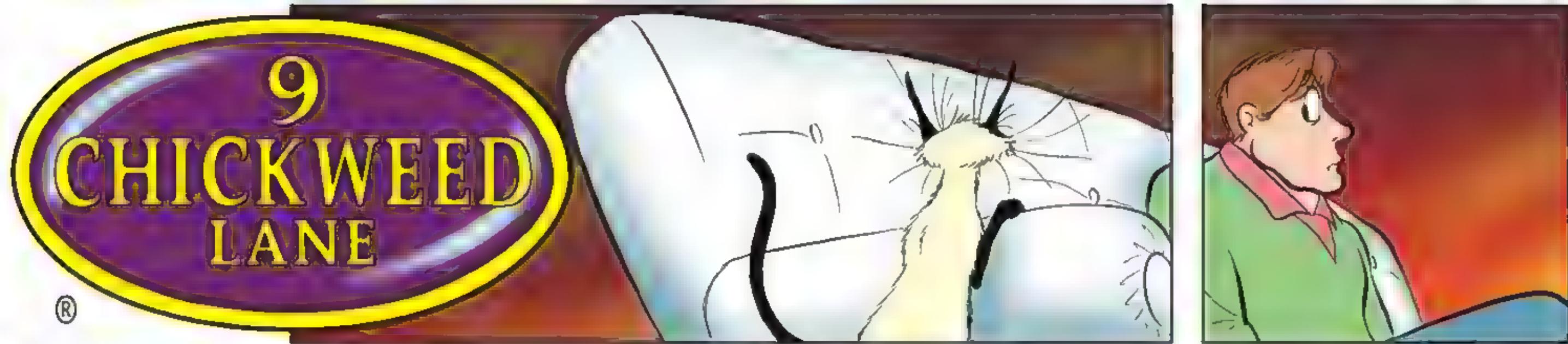
AND THEN, OF COURSE,
THERE'S THE
GRAFFITI...

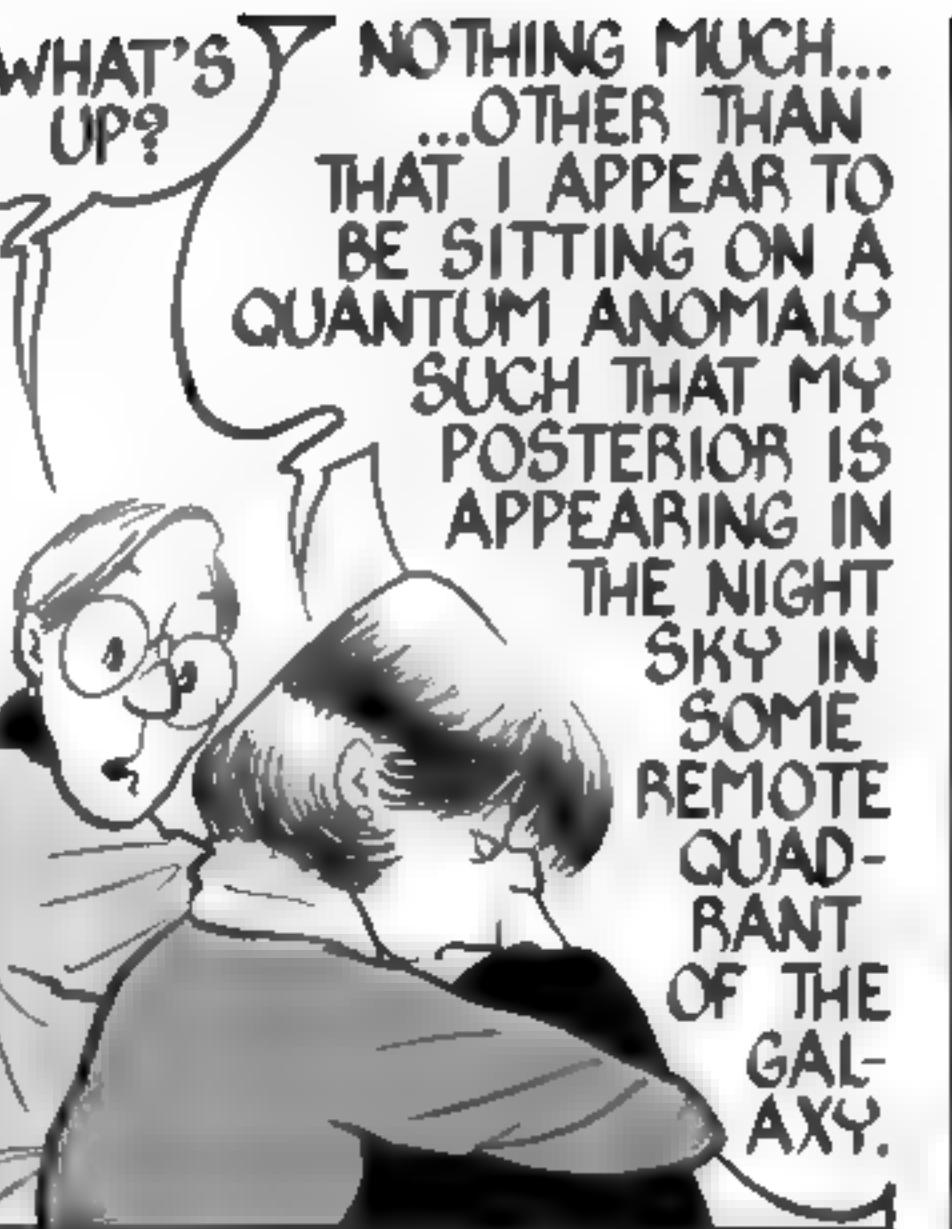


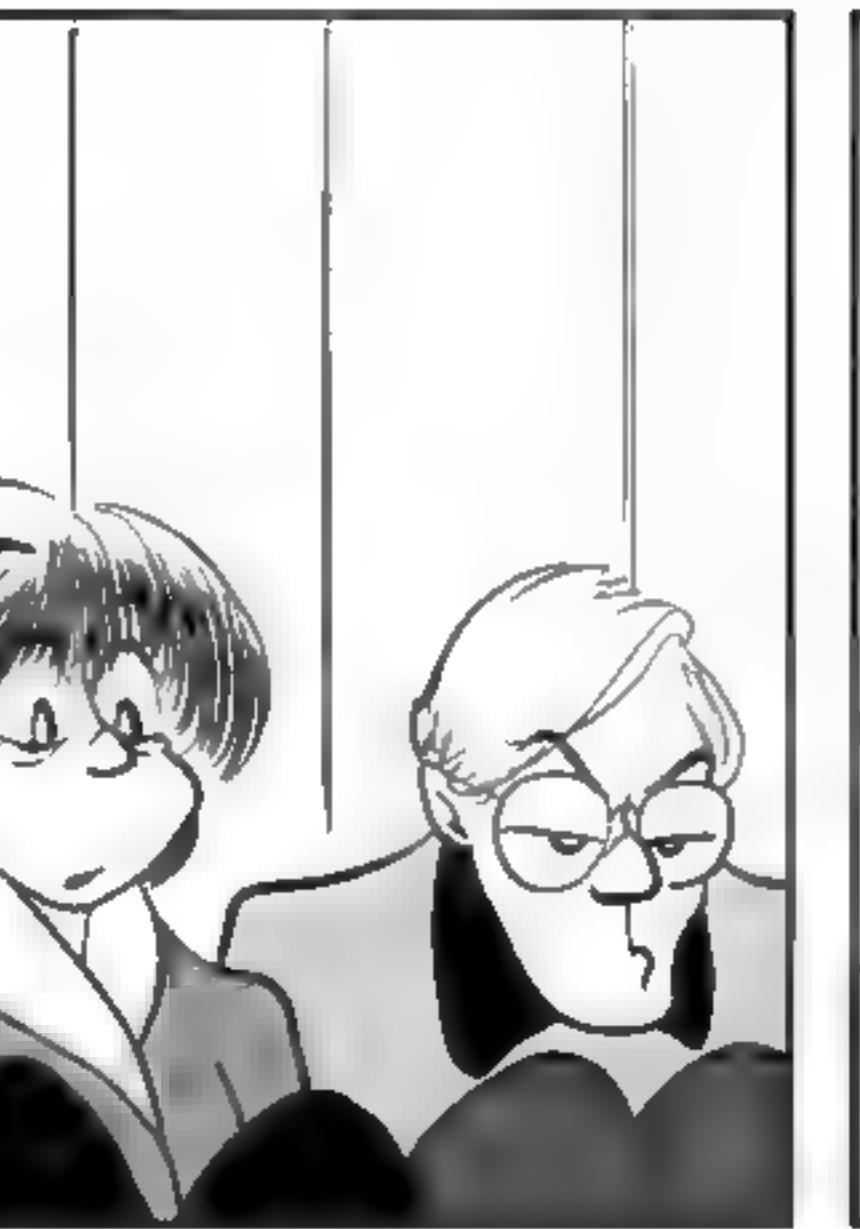
WHEN WILL
MY PENA
CEASE?

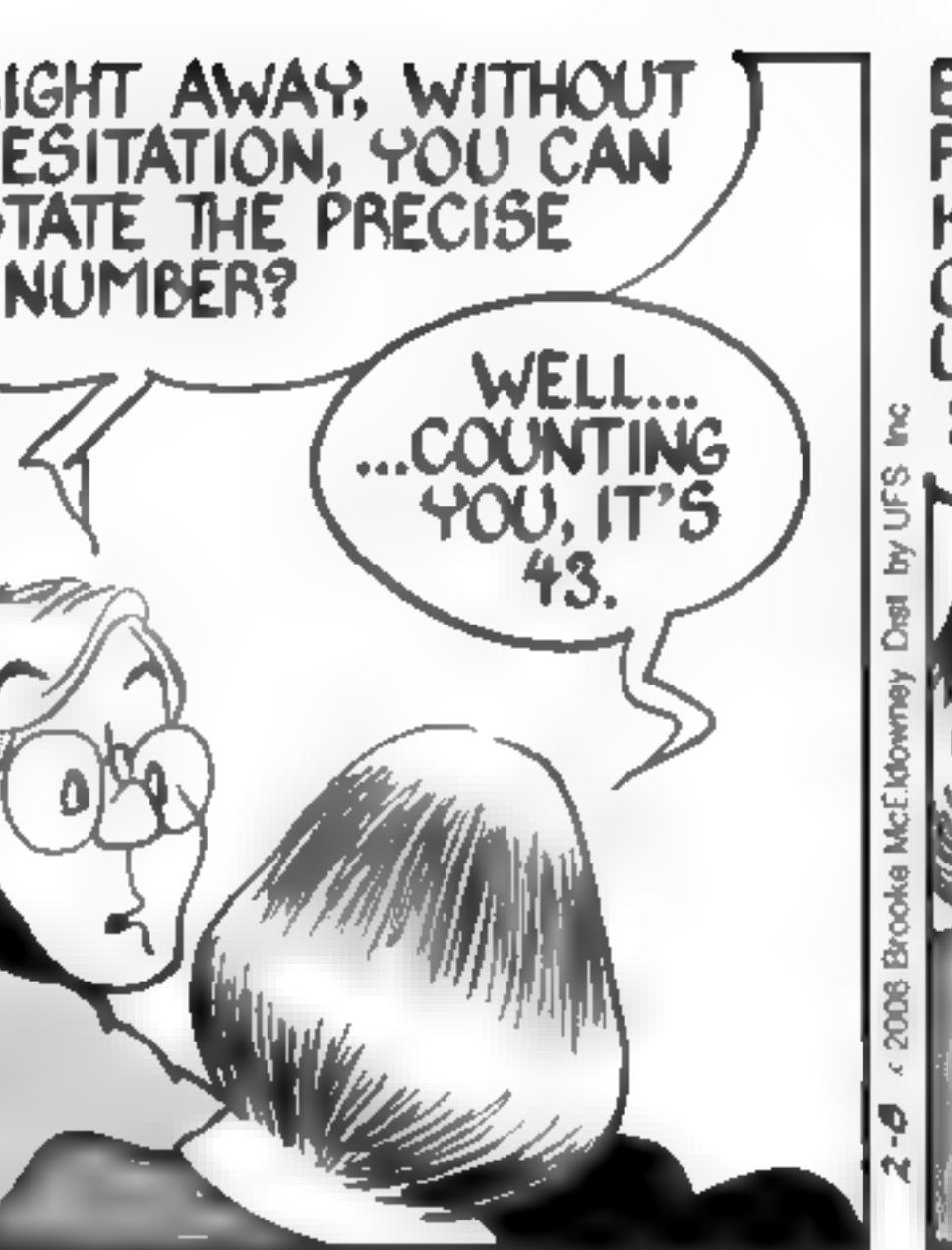
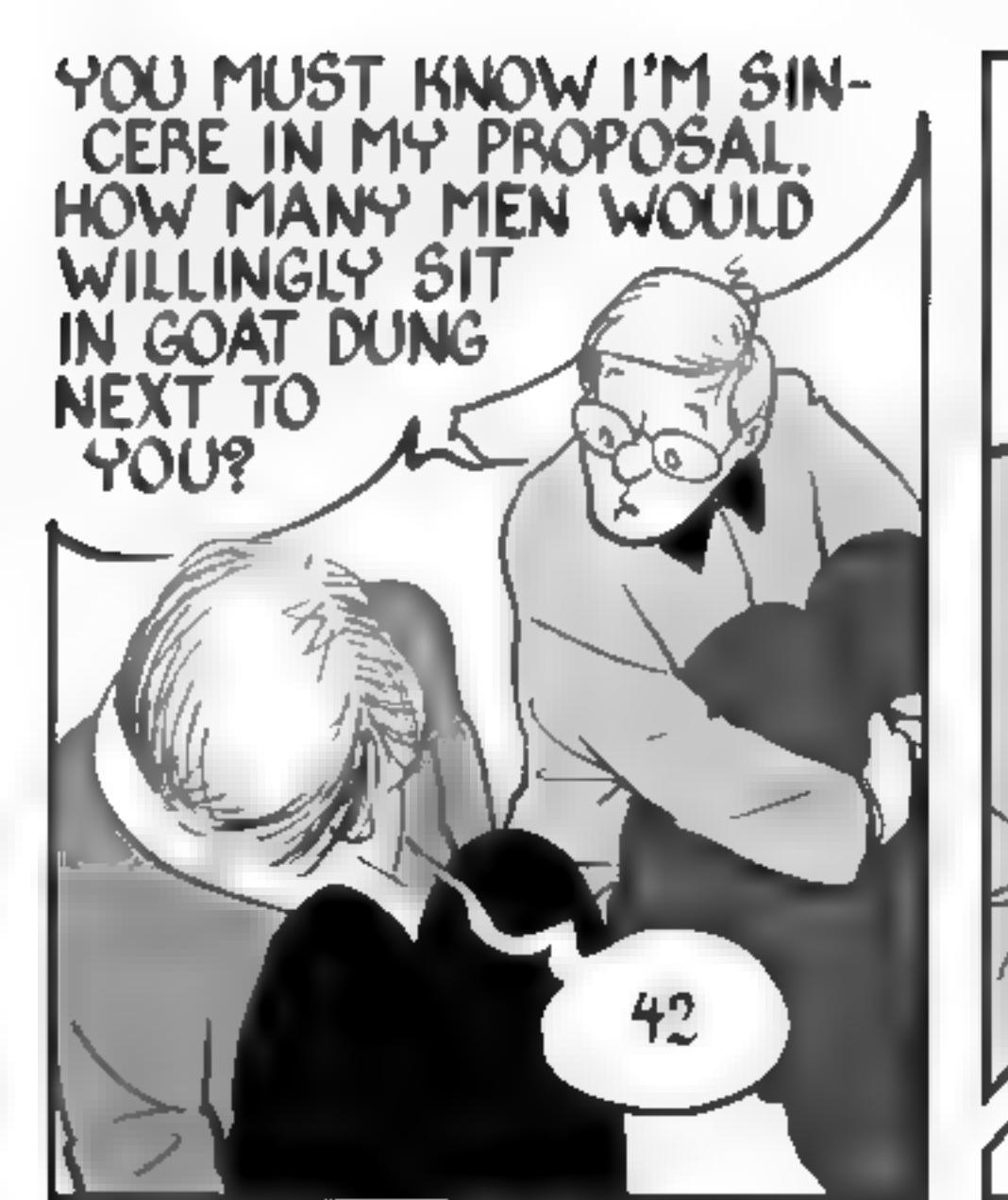
...FOLLOWED BY THE
TARGET PRACTICE...



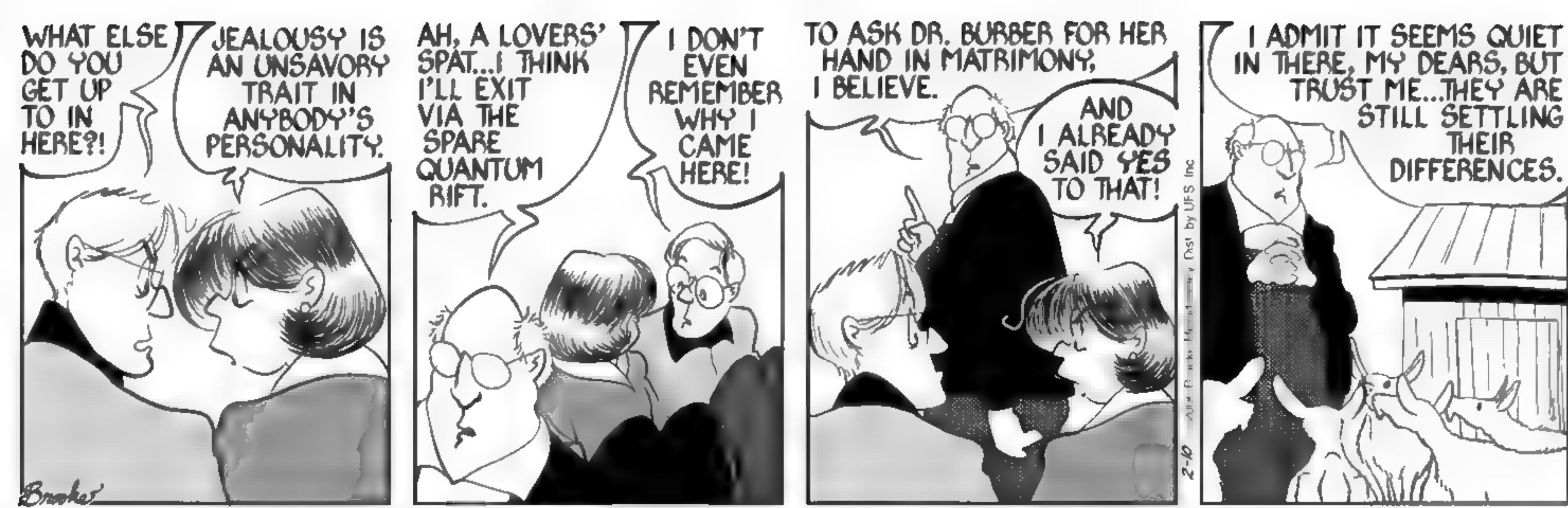


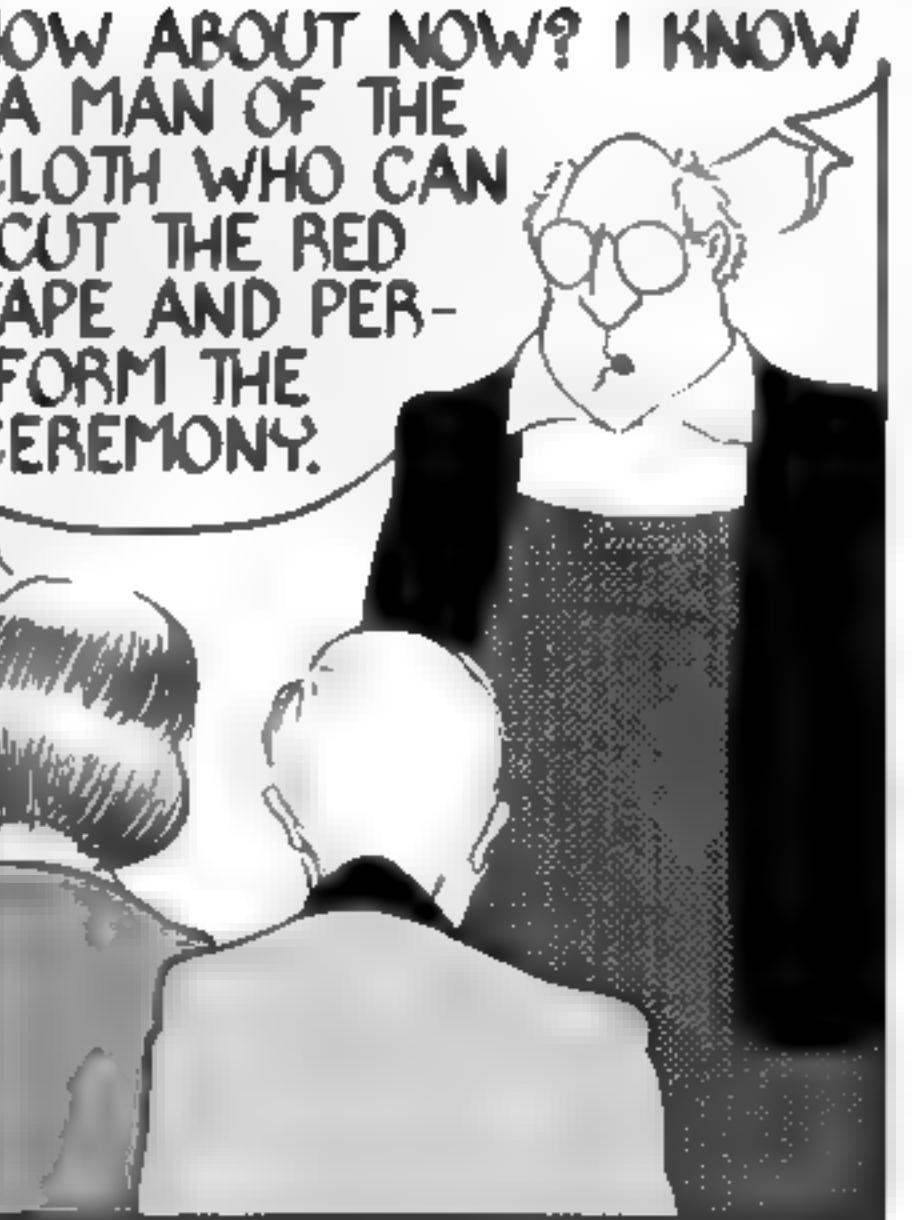


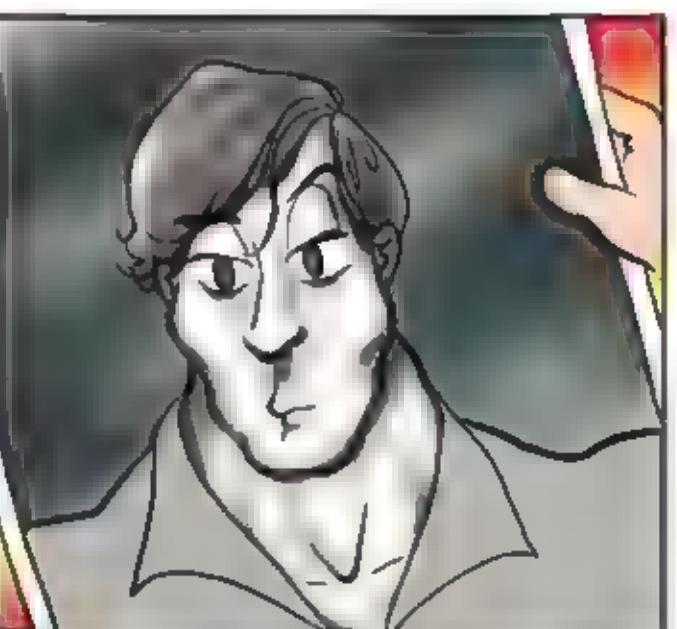
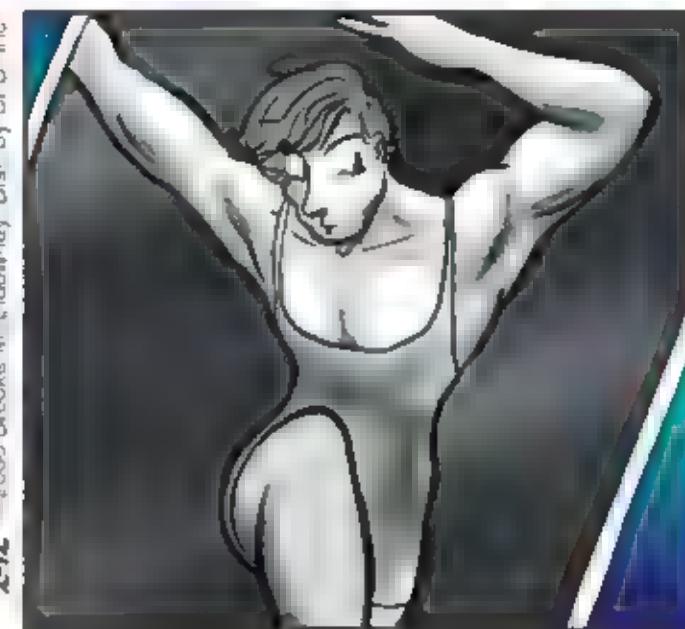
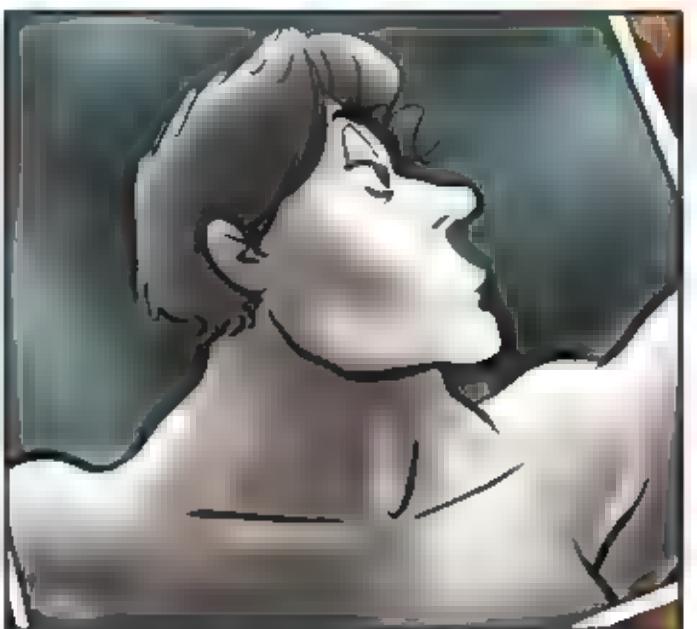












Brooks

NEARLY BELOVED...WE ARE
TETHERED TO GATHER HERE IN
THE LIGHT OF SOD, AND IN THE
ESSENCE OF THIS PROLONGATION,
TO JOIN THIS WOMB AND THIS
MAMMON IN HOUNDS OF
MOLEY BATRIMONY.









WITH THIS WING I THEE RED,
WITH MY WODDY I WEE
THURSHIP, AND WITH
ALL MY GURLDLY
WOODS I DEE
ENTHOW.

Brooke



Brooks

I TAKE THEE TO MY WELDED HUSBAND,
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD FROM THIS
FRAY DOORWARD,
FOR WETTER OR
BURSE, FOR
PITCHER FOR
ROARER,
IN HICKNESS
AND IN
STEALTH,
TILL BETH
US DO
DART.





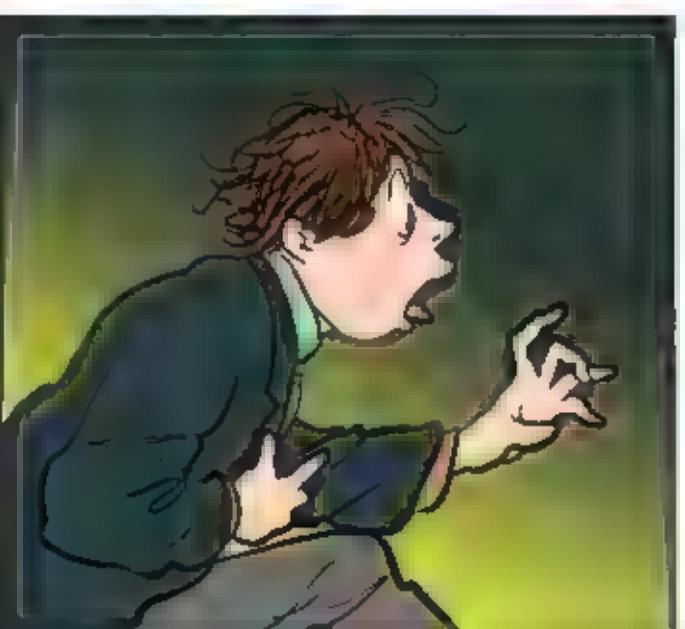
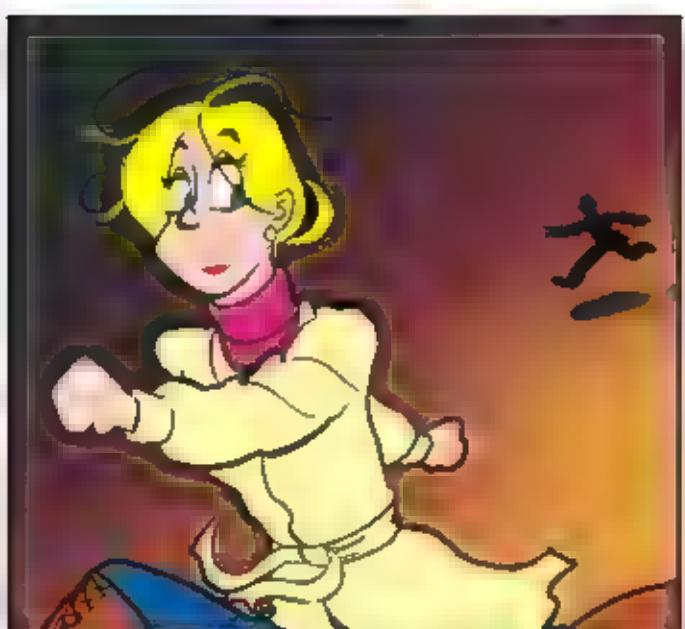
WOW!
I'VE
NEVER
RUN
INTO A
REAL
BALLET
DANCER
BEFORE.

I KNOW
WHAT YOU
MEAN.
THE
LANDSCAPE
IS SO
CLUTTERED
WITH
THE
ARTIFICIAL
KIND.

AH,
SILENCE.
...I LOVE
SILENCE,
EVEN IF
FOR A
MOMENT.



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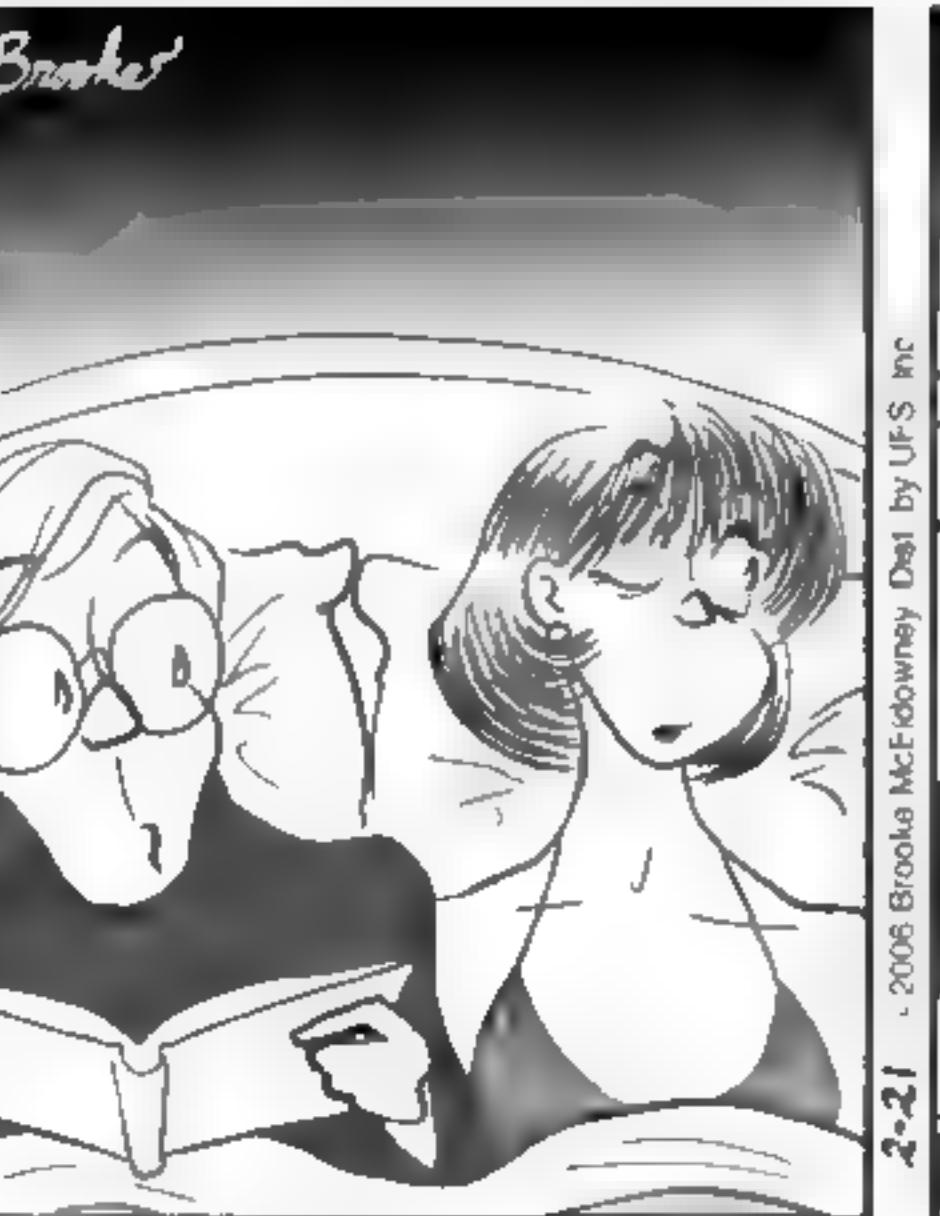


Brooke
THAT'S
WHAT
IT'S LIKE.
...ONLY,
WITH AN
ORCHESTRA.

FORASMUCH AS YOU HAVE CONSENTED
TO TETHER IN WOOLY HEADLOCK, AND
HAVE ECLAIRIED THE SAME BY GIVING
AND RECEIVING OF A PING, AND BY
HANDLING OF JOINS; I RENOUNCE
YOU HUSBAND AND WIFE.
...THOSE WHOM SOD HATH
GROUND TO
THUNDER
LET NO
MAN PUT
TOGETHER.

YOU MAY
NOW DROP TO
THE GROUND
AND DO
TWENTY.







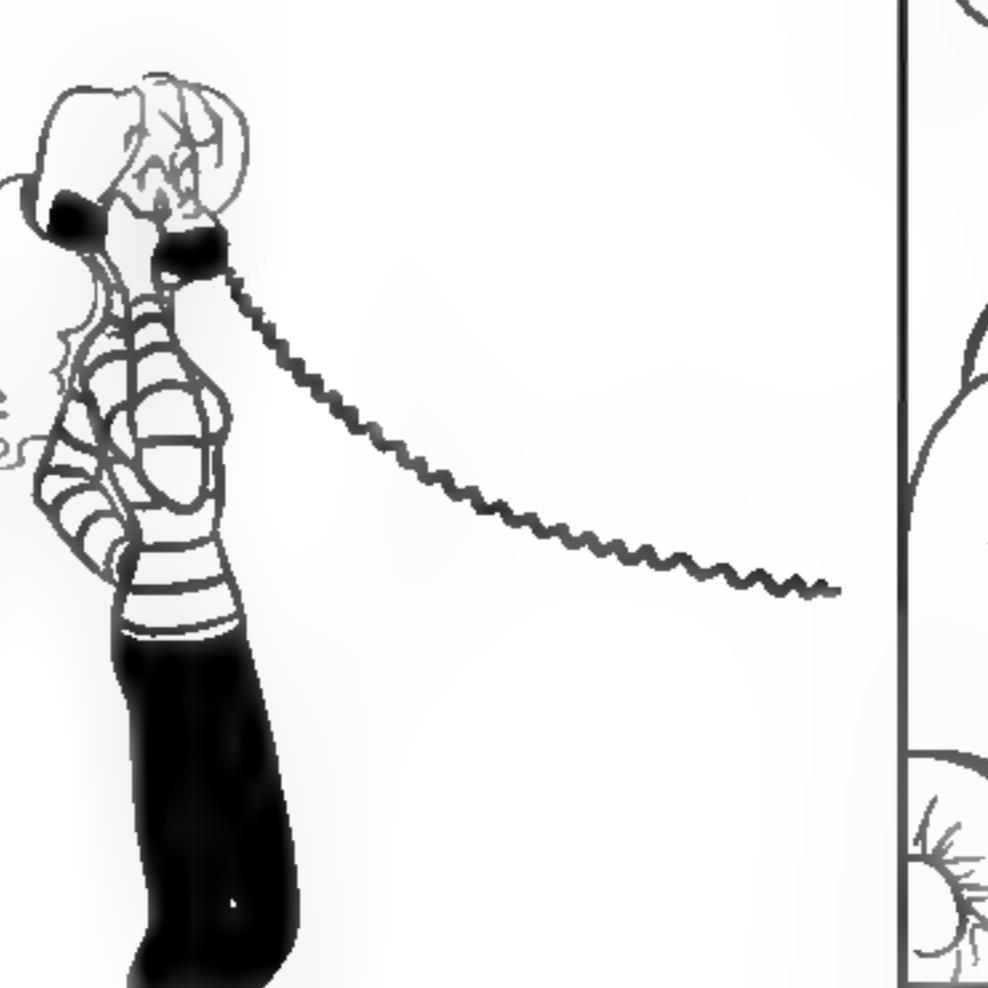




WELL, ELLIOTT, I HAVE TO
SAY I'M SURPRISED YOU
TWO FINALLY GOT SPLICED,
BUT CONGRATULATIONS.
WHAT WOULD
YOU LIKE
ME TO
CALL
YOU
NOW?

Brooks

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9

CHICKWEED LANE

®

HALLMARKS
OF FELINITY:
POINT OF VIEW

A HAIR

A HAIR

A HAIR

2-26 2006 Brooke McEldowney Dist by UFS Inc

A HAIR

MONSTROUS,
HORRIFIC,
CRAZED DRAGON
...ATTACKED
SUDDENLY
FROM AMBUSH...
VIOLENTLY
SUBDUED



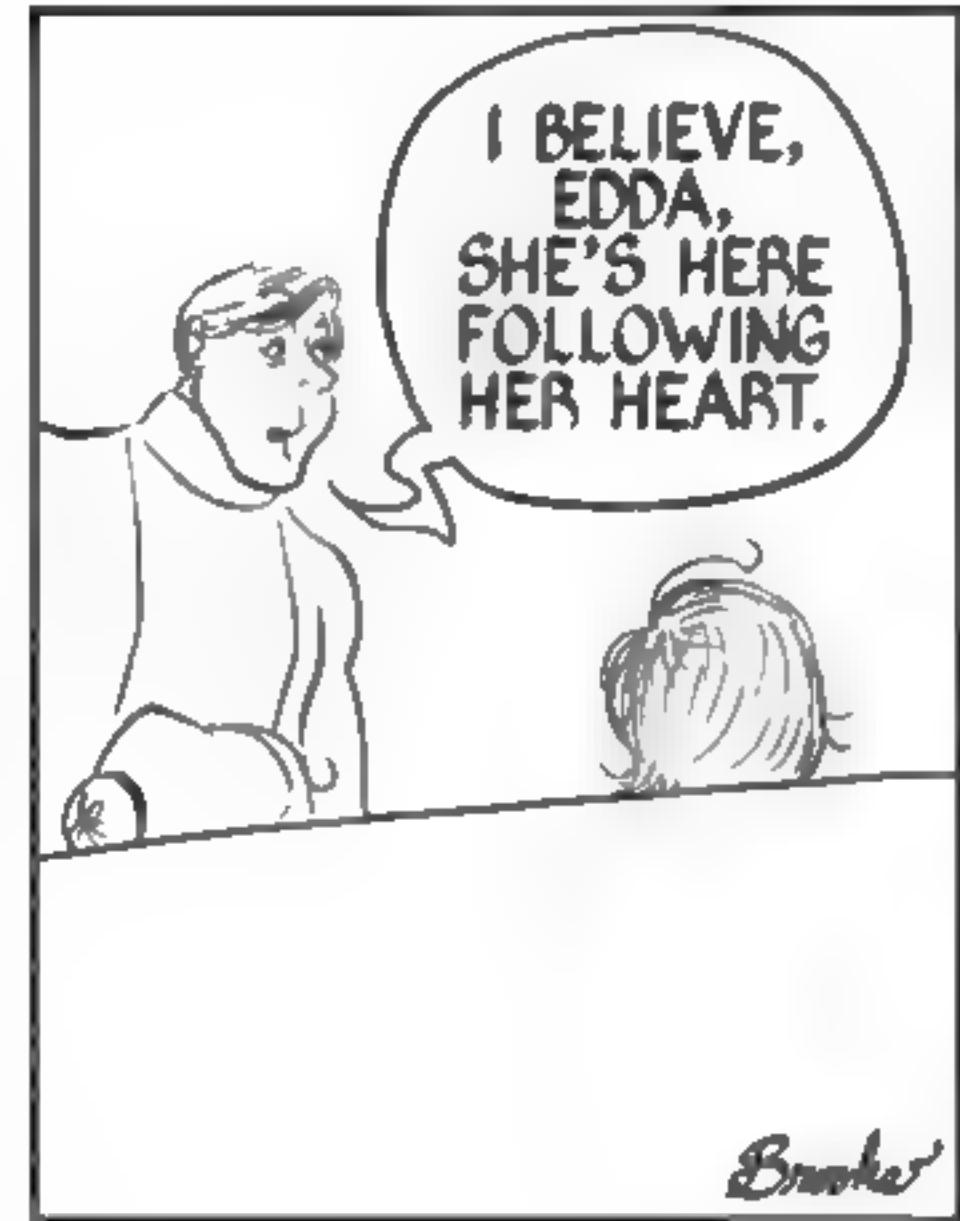
A HAIR

Brooke

?







THE THING IS, I WAS A SISTER BECAUSE OF MY CONVICTION...AND FOR THE LONGEST TIME I CLUNG TO IT.



THEN ONE DAY I FOUND MYSELF VISITING WHO I WAS, AND I FOUND MY CONVICTION HAD BEEN SUPERCEDED BY A NEW ONE...ONE I SIMPLY COULDN'T SWEEP UNDER THE EDGE OF MY CONSCIENCE.

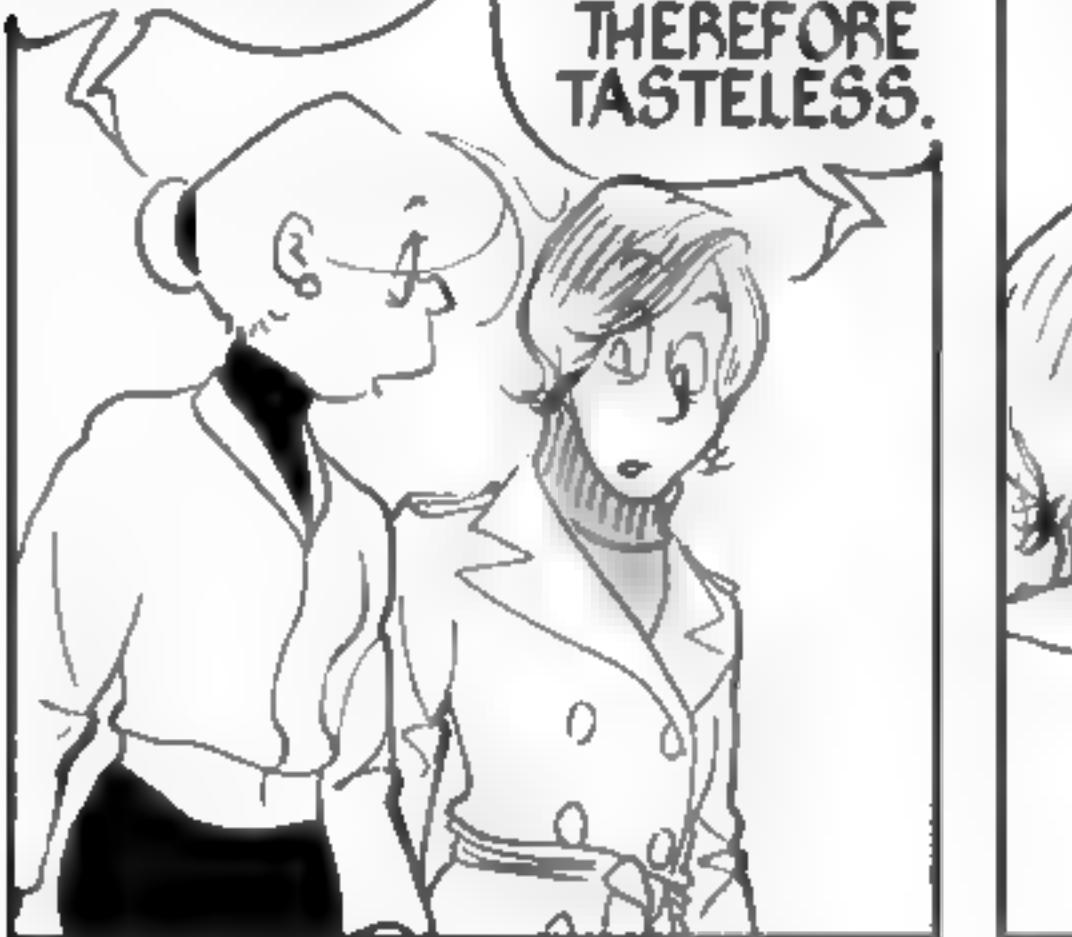


IT WAS ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS I'VE EVER HAD TO MAKE. ...BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.



SO, WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING OUT OF THE SLAMMER?

I FIND THAT QUESTION APT, AND THEREFORE TASTELESS.



WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOU?

GLORIOUS. YOU'LL GET ACCUSTOMED TO IT.



SISTER STEVEN,
YOUR 10 O'CLOCK
APPOINTMENT
IS HERE.

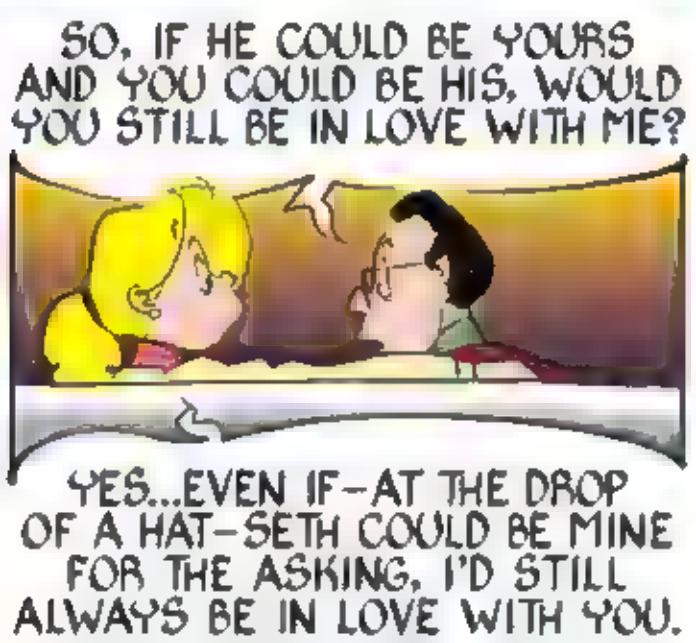
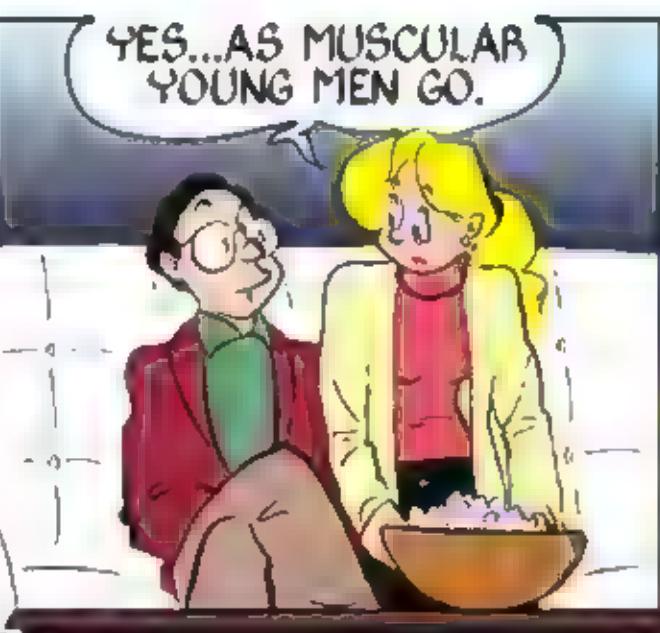
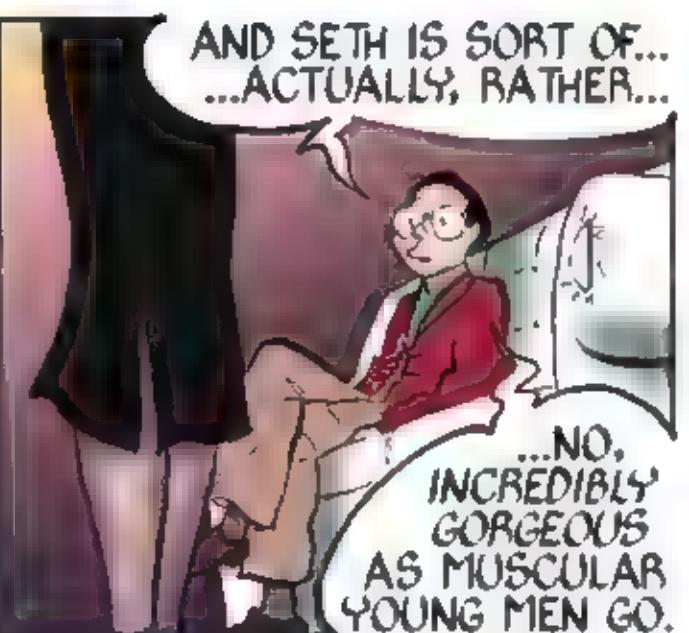


FATHER DURLY,
THANK YOU FOR
DROPPING BY.



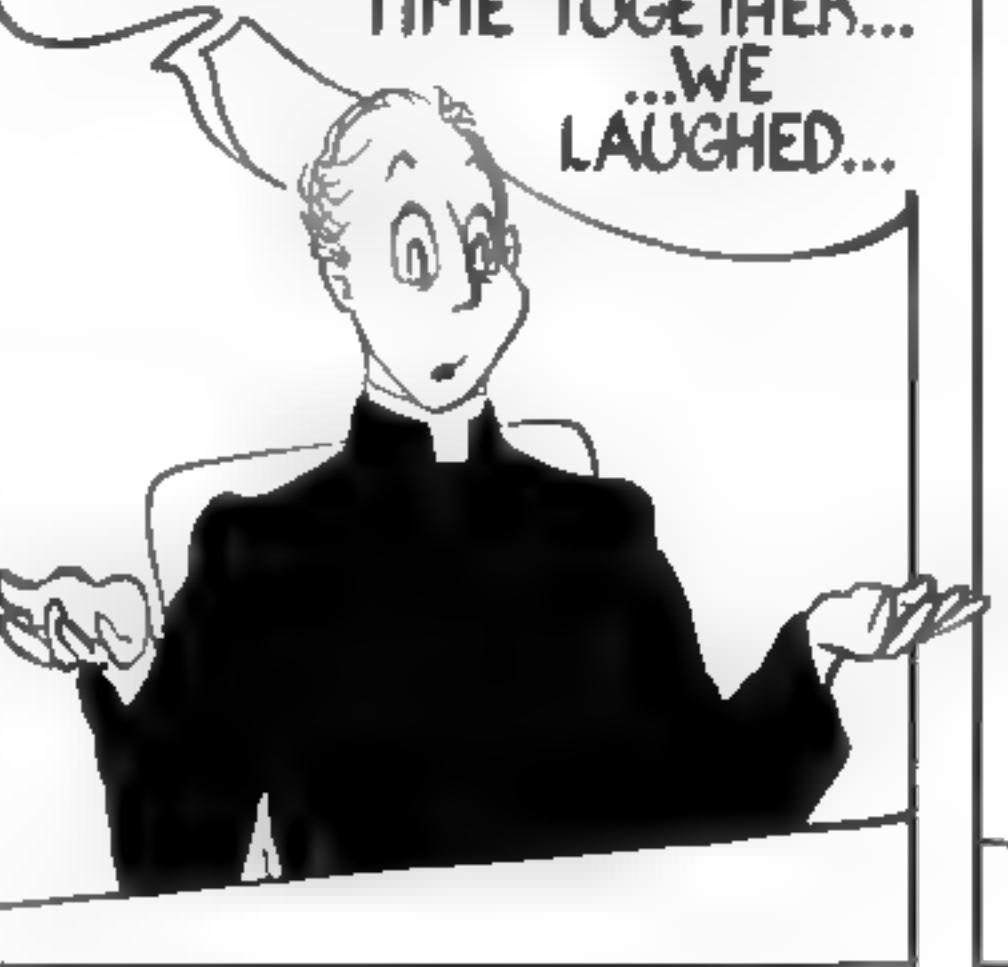


Brooke





ALL SISTER ARAMUS AND
I DID WAS TALK. WE
LAUGHED, WE SPENT SOME
TIME TOGETHER...
...WE
LAUGHED...



YOU KNOW, I DON'T
LIKE WHAT YOU'RE
IMPLYING ABOUT
SISTER ARAMUS
AND ME.

I'M IMPLYING NOTHING MORE
THAN THAT YOU HAD AN
INFLUENCE ON HER.
WHAT YOU DON'T LIKE IS
YOUR OWN INFERENCE...
WHICH REVEALS MUCH
MORE ABOUT YOUR
CONSCIENCE THAN
I THINK YOU
WANT TO
KNOW.

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THERE'S NOTHING ABOUT
MY CONSCIENCE THAT
I NEED NOT TO WANT
TO KNOW...AND I'M
NOT TELLING YOU
WHAT IT IS.

Brooke

WAIT A
MINUTE.
WHAT DID
I SAY?

WHITE YOU
WORK IT OUT,
I HAVE
SOME PAPERS
TO GRADE.

WHAT I OBJECT TO ARE
THE UNSUBSTANTIATED
SUGGESTIONS YOU ARE
ALLOWING TO FLOW
FROM THIS OFFICE.

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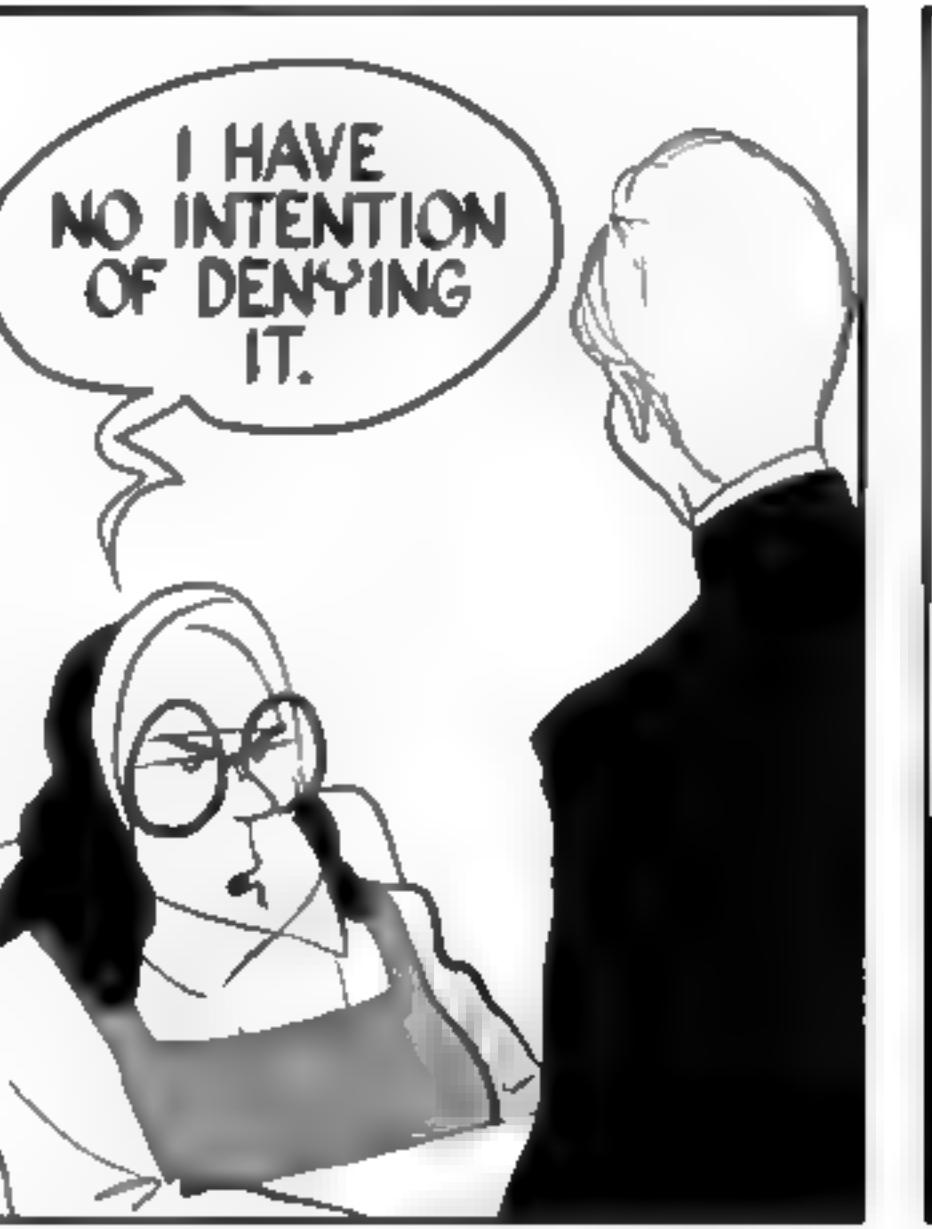
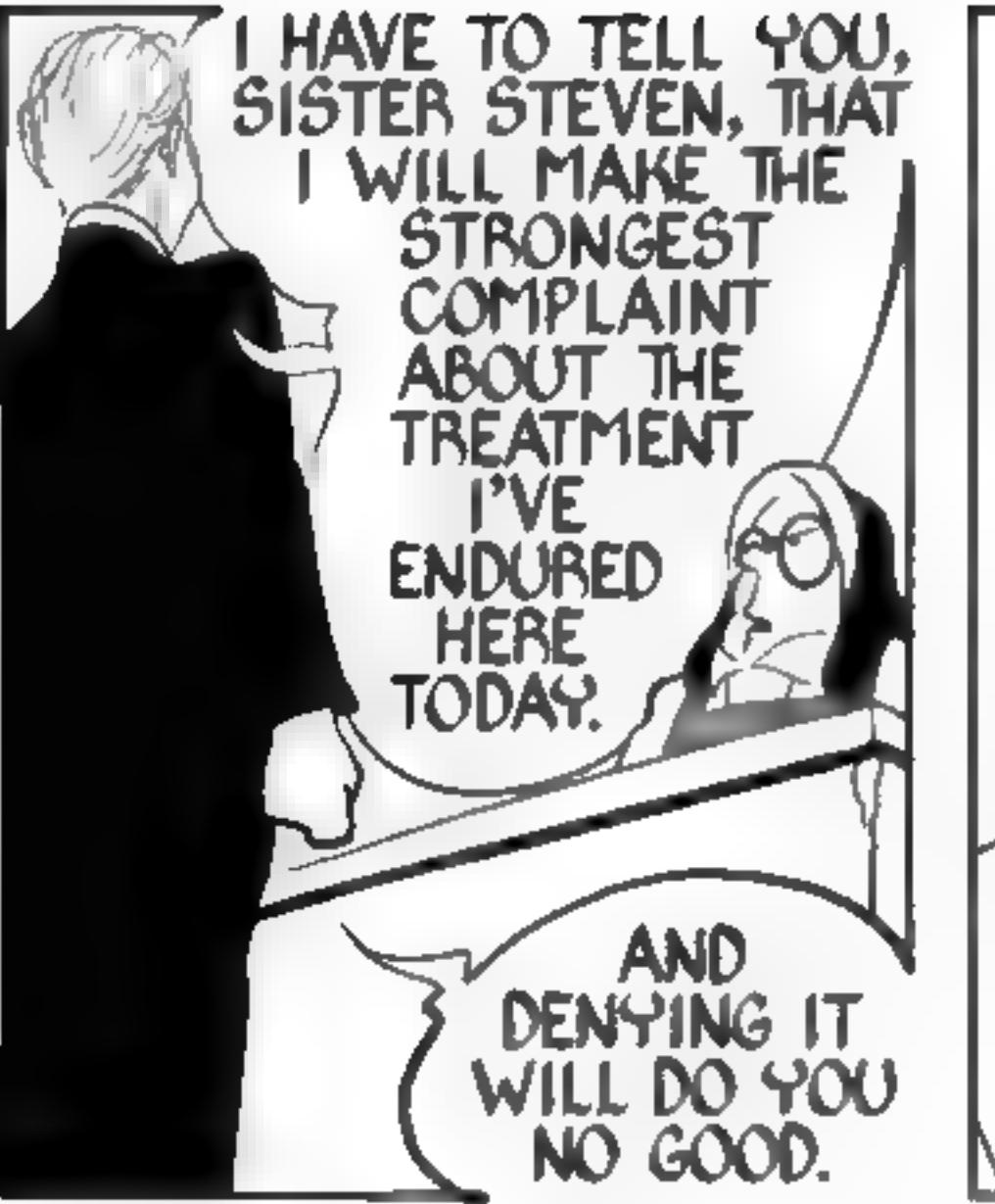
I ASSURE YOU,
NO RUMORS LEAVE
THIS SCHOOL.

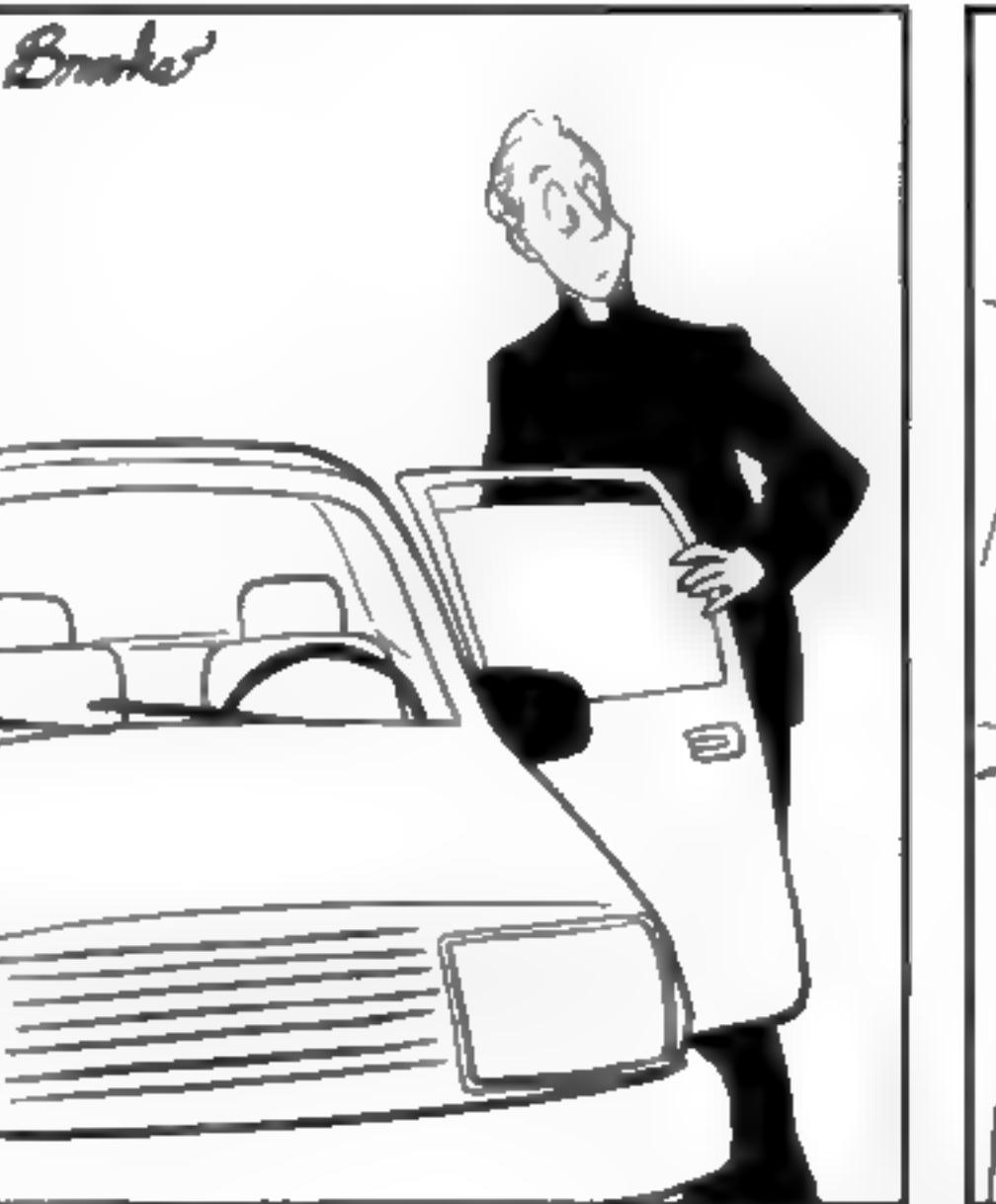
CORRECT?

Brooke

HEADMISTRESS

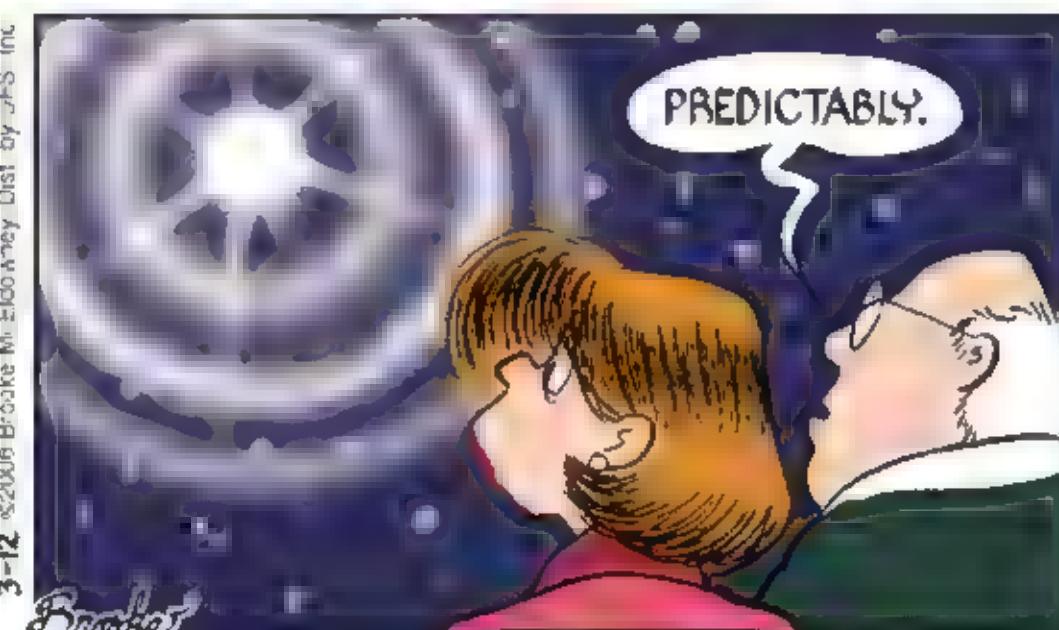
YES,
SISTER.





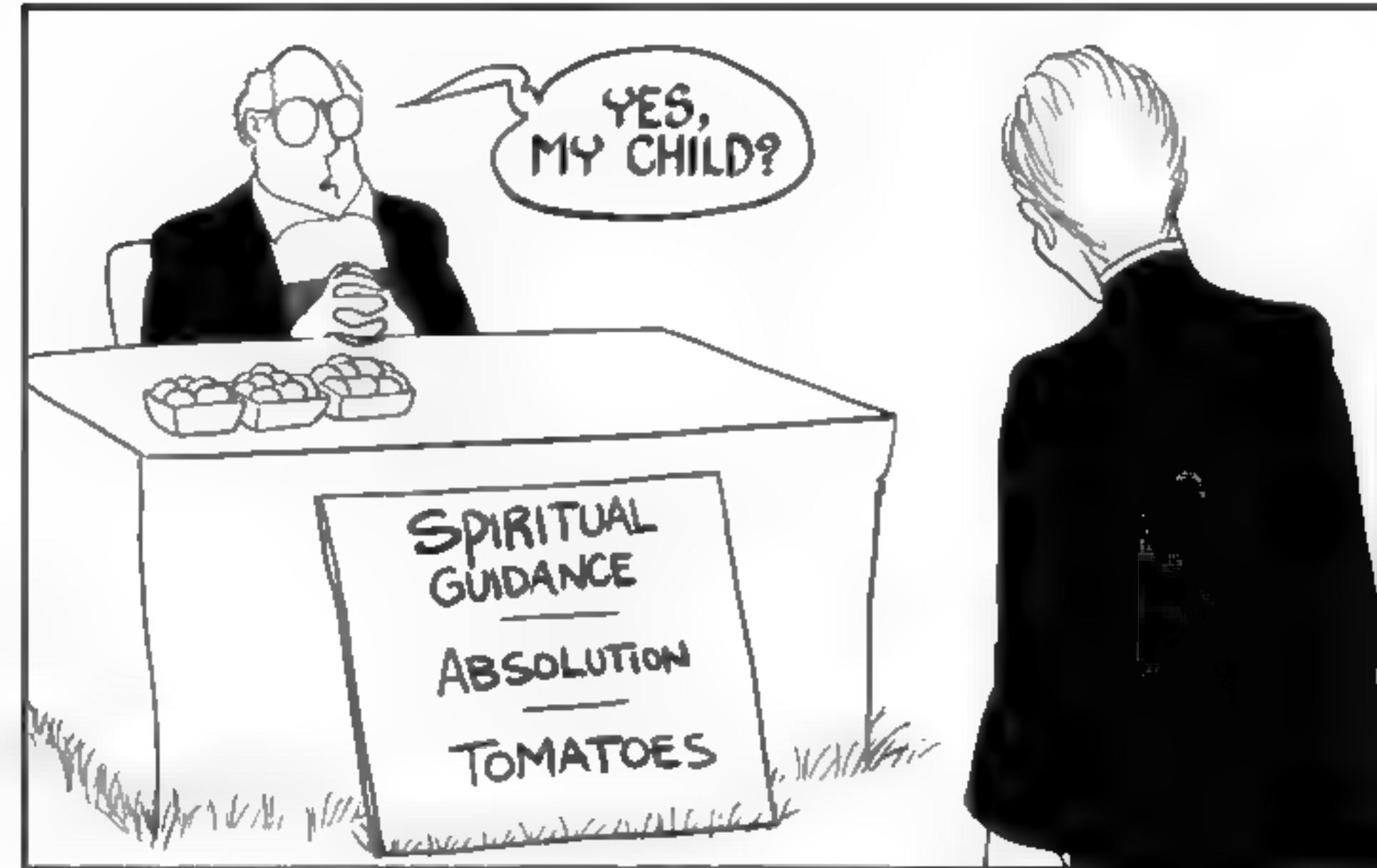
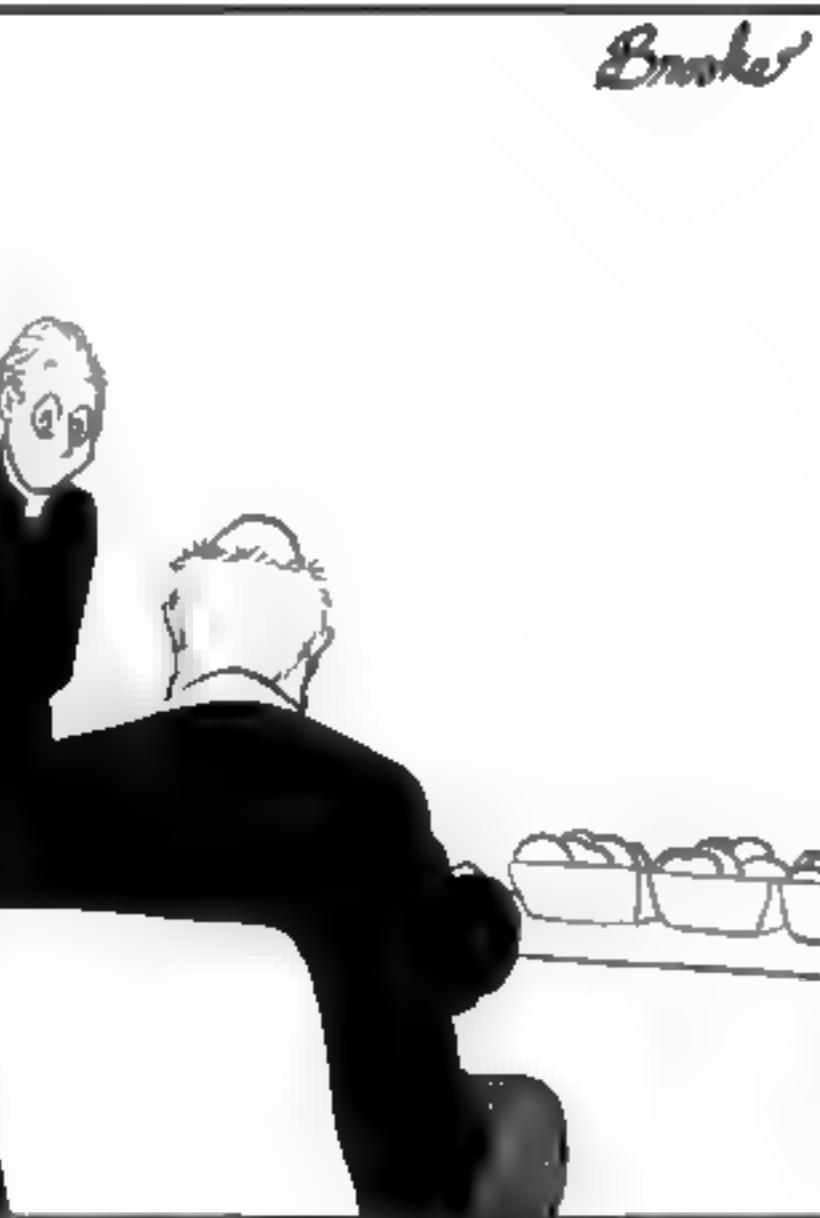


OBSERVE, IF YOU WILL, THAT PARTICULARLY BRIGHT STAR, TWINKLING JUST ABOVE THE HORIZON...THE ONE ALOOF FROM THE WELTER OF STARS ABOUT IT. THAT IS THE STAR THAT BINDS TOGETHER THE SYSTEM OF PLANETS THAT I HUMBLY CALL MY HOME. DESPITE ITS DISTANCE, IT HAS BRED A RACE OF MEN NOT ENTIRELY UNLIKE THAT OF THIS WORLD.





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THE THING IS, I FELL
IN LOVE. I NEVER ACTED
ON IT. ALL I DID WAS
TOUCH HER HAND. THEN
WE PARTED AND NEVER
SAW EACH OTHER
AGAIN.

Mr. Fidowmyer Drawn by UFS, Inc

Brooks

BORESVILLE.

"BORESVILLE"!? I DON'T THINK
I'VE EVER HEARD ANYONE
RESPOND TO A CONFESSION
WITH THE WORD
"BORESVILLE"!

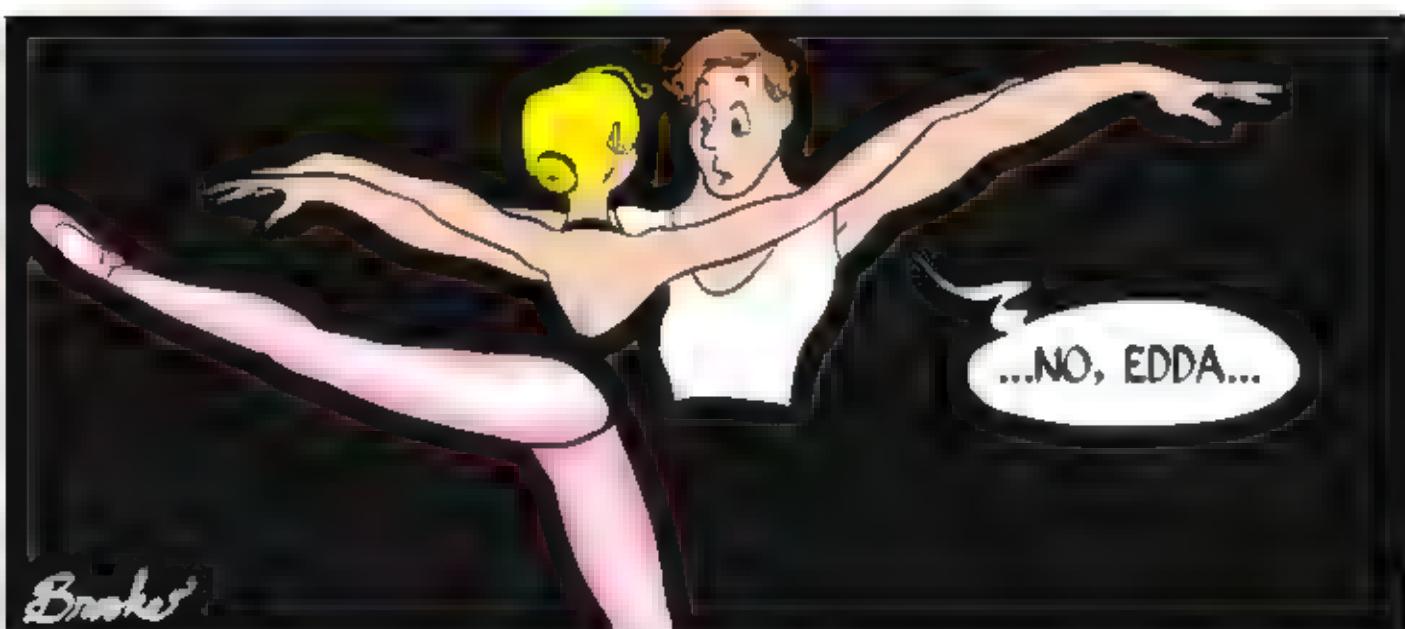
Y THAT HAS TO BE THE
MOST UNCONSCIONABLE
REACTION I'VE EVER
WITNESSED! HAVE
YOU NOTHING
ELSE TO
SAY!?

Bruker



YOU CAN'T TRULY EXPECT TO EXACT
PENANCE BY SPANKING MY HAND WITH
A RULER. I'VE UNBURDENED MY SOUL
TO YOU. THE PENANCE
SHOULD RESONATE
SYMBOLICALLY
AND
SPIRITUALLY.



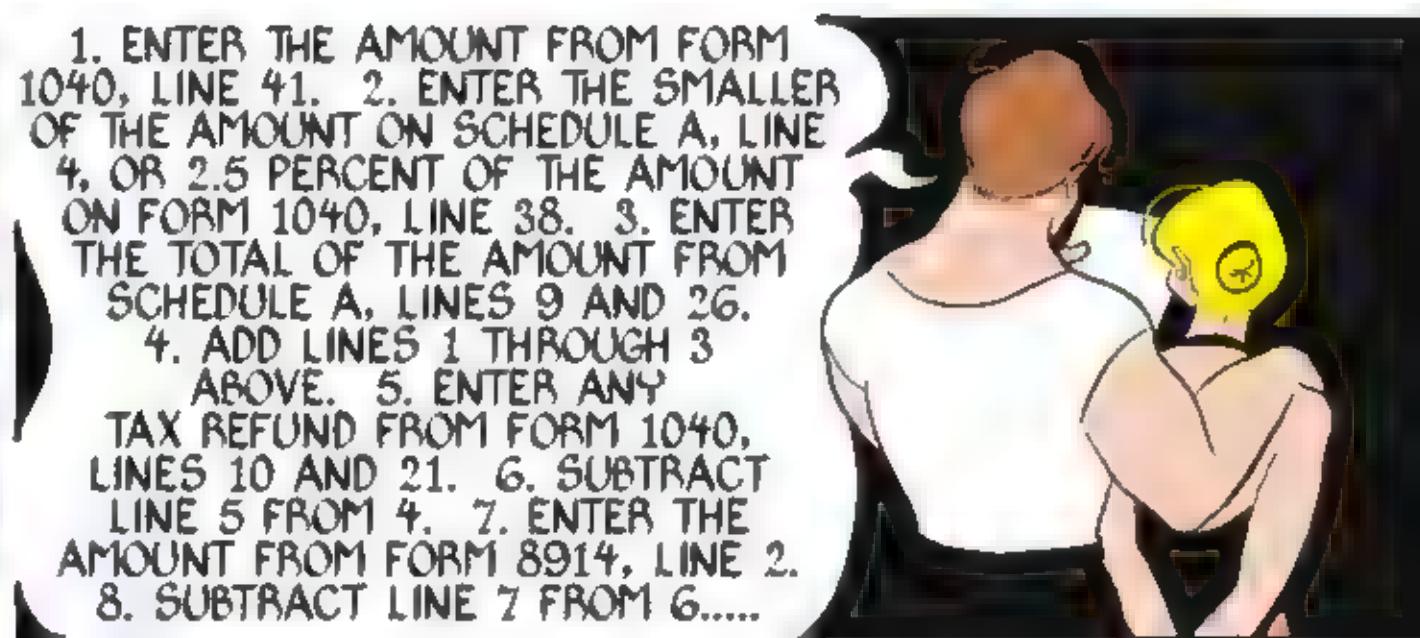


Brooker



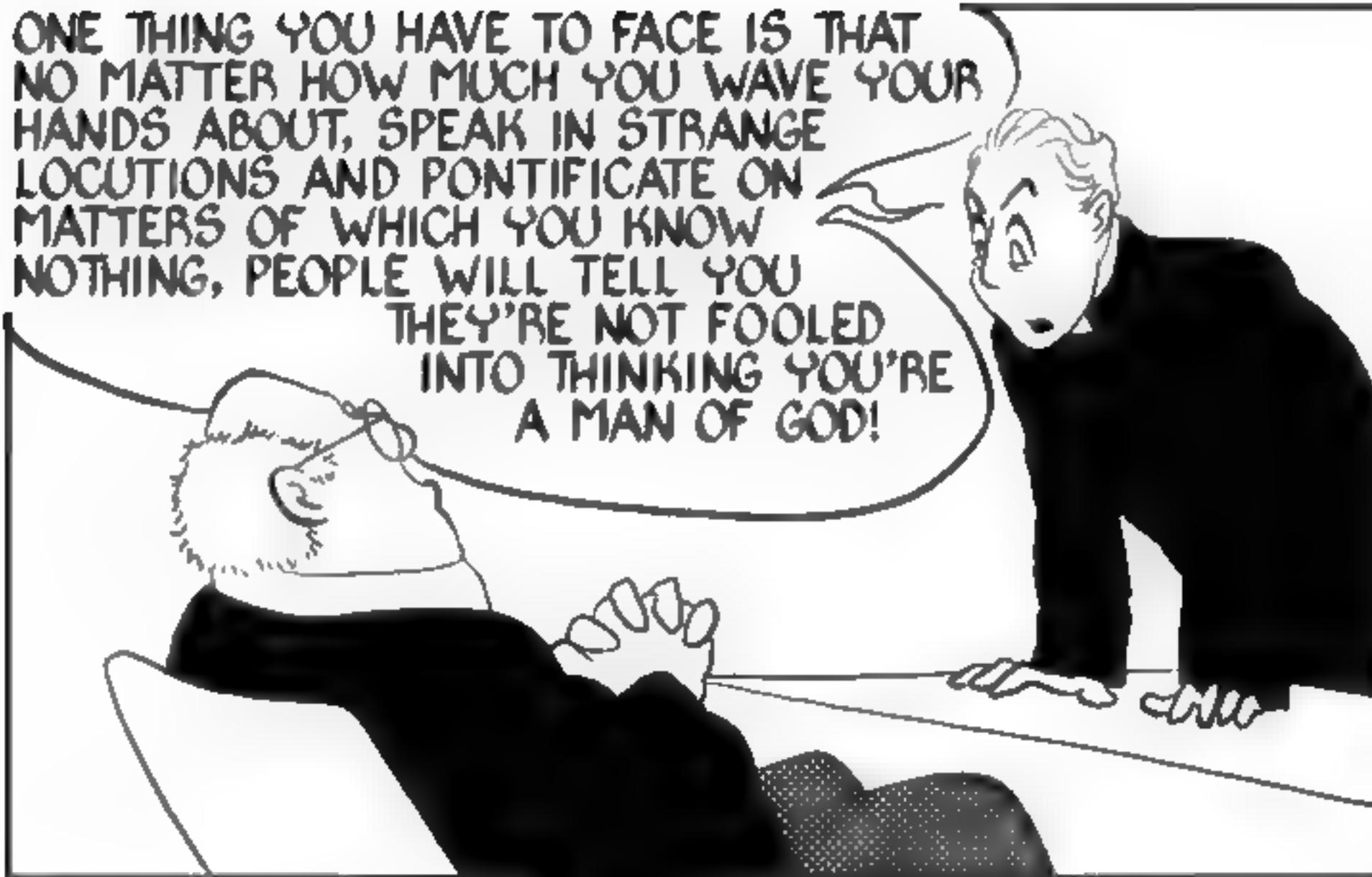
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1. ENTER THE AMOUNT FROM FORM 1040, LINE 41.
2. ENTER THE SMALLER OF THE AMOUNT ON SCHEDULE A, LINE 4, OR 2.5 PERCENT OF THE AMOUNT ON FORM 1040, LINE 38.
3. ENTER THE TOTAL OF THE AMOUNT FROM SCHEDULE A, LINES 9 AND 26.
4. ADD LINES 1 THROUGH 3 ABOVE.
5. ENTER ANY TAX REFUND FROM FORM 1040, LINES 10 AND 21.
6. SUBTRACT LINE 5 FROM 4.
7. ENTER THE AMOUNT FROM FORM 8914, LINE 2.
8. SUBTRACT LINE 7 FROM 6.....



ONE THING YOU HAVE TO FACE IS THAT
NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WAVE YOUR
HANDS ABOUT, SPEAK IN STRANGE
LOCUTIONS AND PONTIFICATE ON
MATTERS OF WHICH YOU KNOW
NOTHING, PEOPLE WILL TELL YOU

THEY'RE NOT FOOLED
INTO THINKING YOU'RE
A MAN OF GOD!



DON'T LET IT GET
YOU DOWN, FATHER DURLY.
IT MAY SURPRISE YOU
TO LEARN THAT PEOPLE
HAVE SAID THE VERY
SAME THING TO ME.



WHAT
DO
YOU
KNOW
OF
GOD?!

WELL,
LET ME SEE...
...HE HAS A DECIDED
PREFERENCE FOR
BOW TIES, HIS
FAVORITE COLOR
IS RED...

...HE CHEATS
AT SCRABBLE,
AND HIS
FRIENDS
CALL HIM
MONTY.

WHY
WOULDN'T
I
KNOW
THAT?

I SAID,
"HIS
FRIENDS."

HE LOOKS LIKE VICTOR
MATURE, BUT NOT ALWAYS.
SOMETIMES HE'S JUST
AN EXTREMELY LARGE,
BAVARIAN CUCKOO CLOCK.

WHAT?!

Journey West by UFS Inc

3-2

OH...
...OR ROSALIND
RUSSELL.

STOP!

Brooks



Brooke



GOD, THE
FATHER,
MAKER OF
HEAVEN
AND EARTH,
GETS LONELY!?

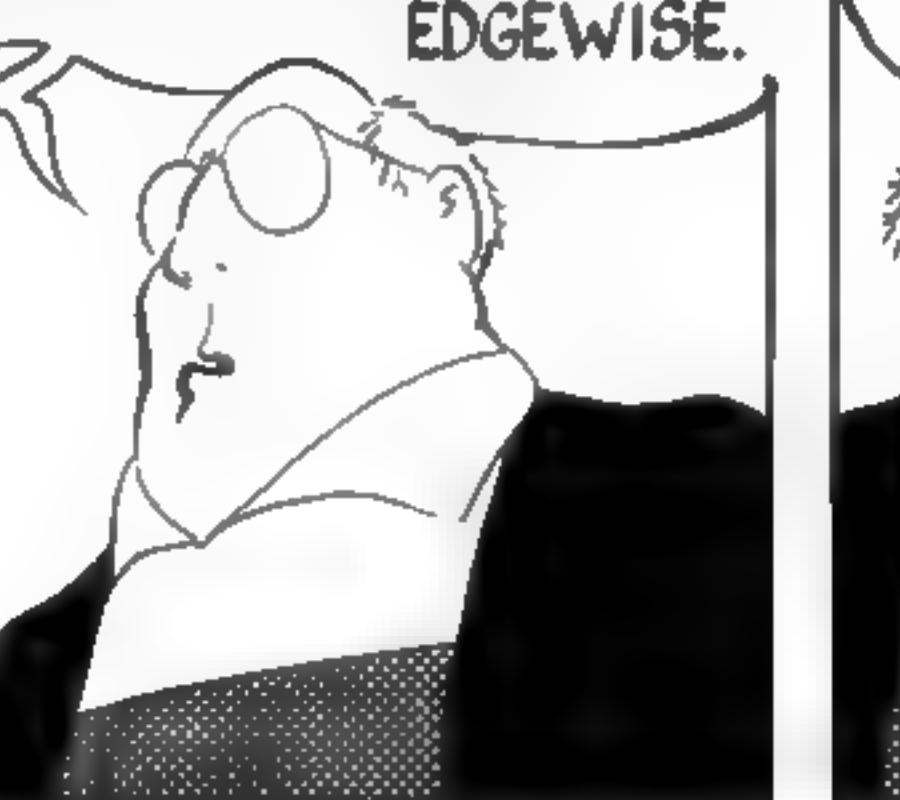
YOU IF NO ONE
EVER LISTENED
TO YOU?



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3-23

ALL HE EVER HEARS IS...
...GIVE ME NICER HIPS,
BLÜER EYES, MORE MONEY,
KILL HER, MAIM HIM, SMITE
THIS, PLAGUE THAT...HE
CAN'T GET A WORD IN
EDGEWISE.



THERE'S NOTHING MONTY
WOULD LIKE BETTER THAN
TO SIT DOWN FOR A LITTLE
BANTER OVER DINNER.
BUT INSTEAD HE'S TREATED
LIKE A WAITER...HE TAKES
ORDERS...LISTENS
TO COMPLAINTS
ABOUT THE
FOOD...



BUT
YOU
LISTEN.

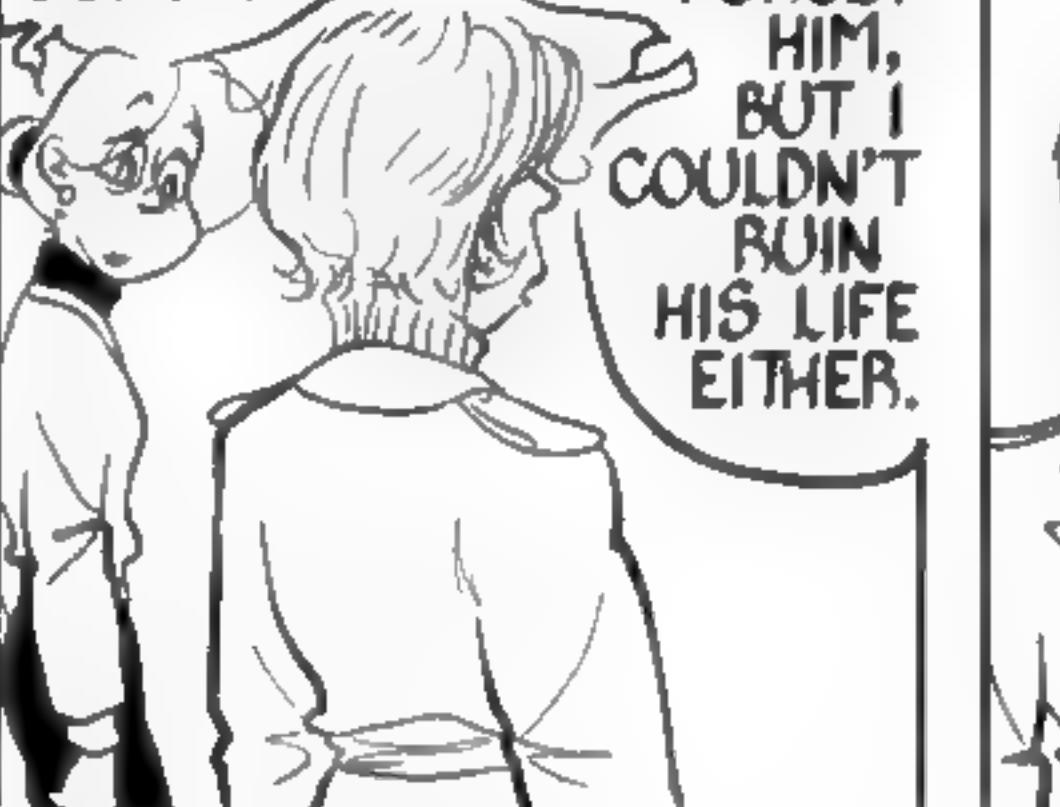


YOU SHOULD
HEAR HIS
STORY ABOUT
THE TIME HE
MET KATHARINE
HEPBURN.

SO,
WHATEVER
HAPPENED
WITH YOU
AND FATHER
DURLY?

X NOTHING.
WE BECAME
FRIENDS, THEN
WE PARTED.
I COULDN'T
FORGET
HIM, BUT I
COULDN'T
RUIN
HIS LIFE
EITHER.

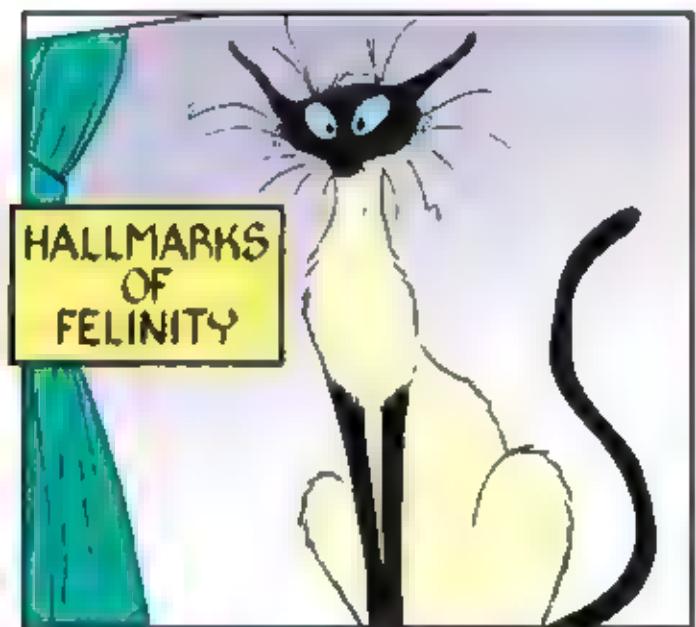
YOU KNOW WHAT
MIGHT HAPPEN IF
I TOLD HIM HOW
I FEEL?





BUT FOR A MAN LIKE FATHER DURLY, WHO HAS DEVOTED HIS BODY AND SOUL TO THE CHURCH, IMAGINE WHAT WOULD HAVE BEFALLEN HIM HAD I TOLD HIM MY FEELINGS.



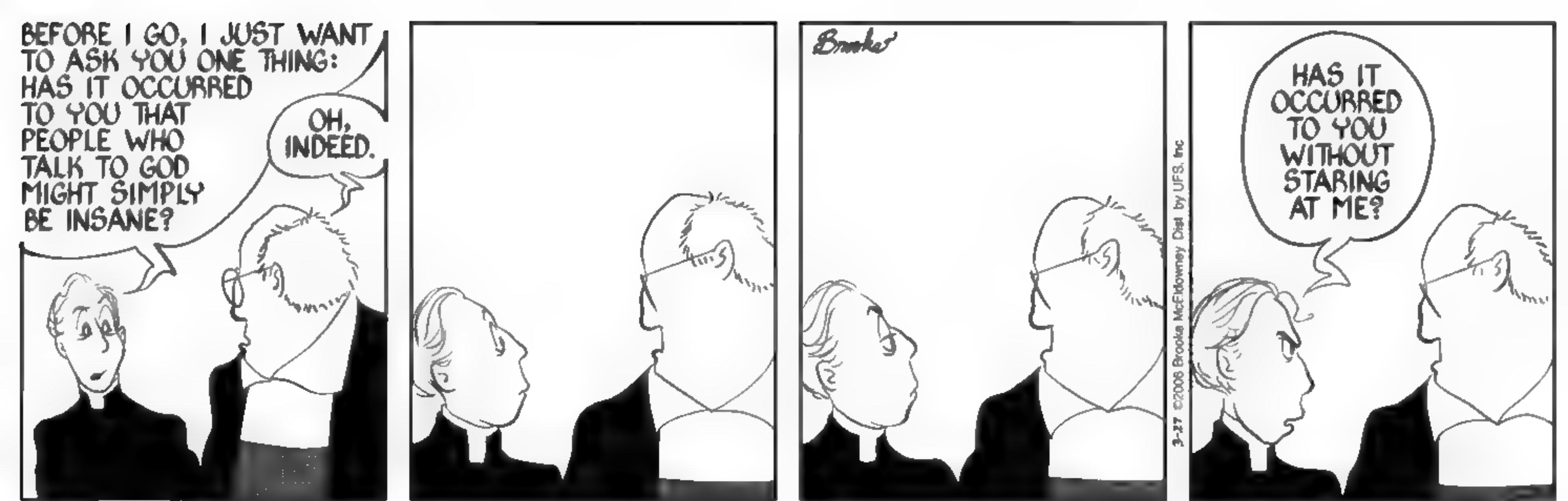


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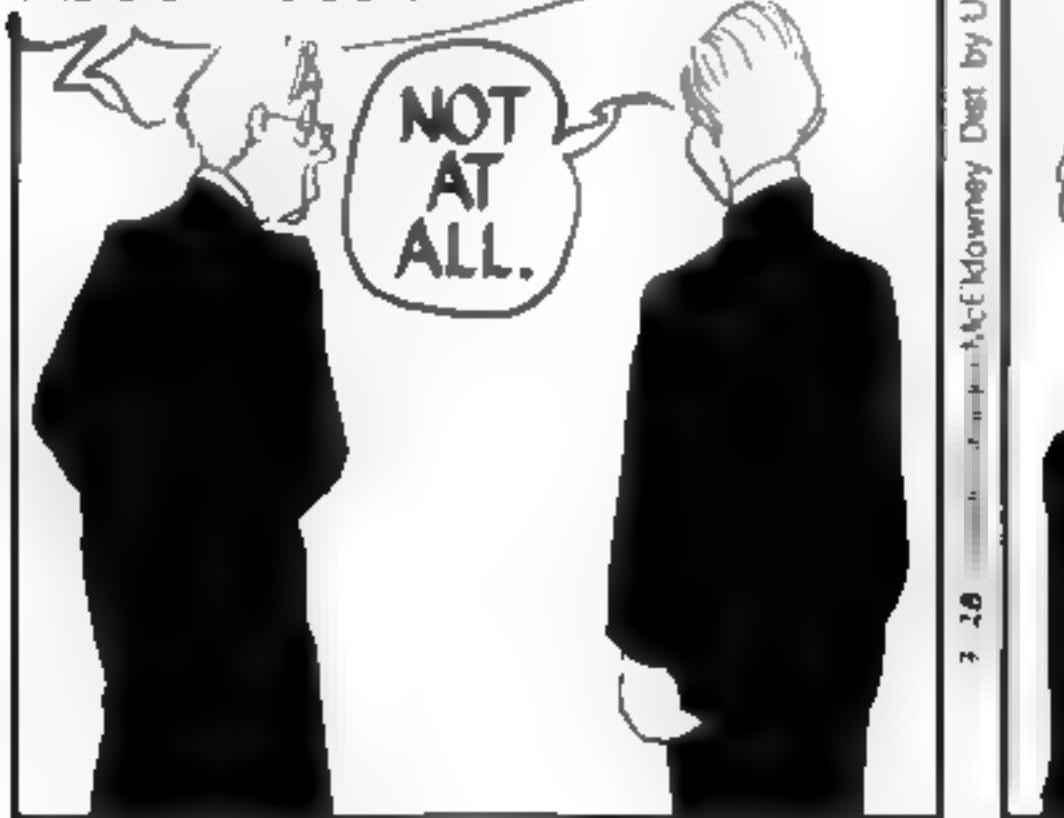


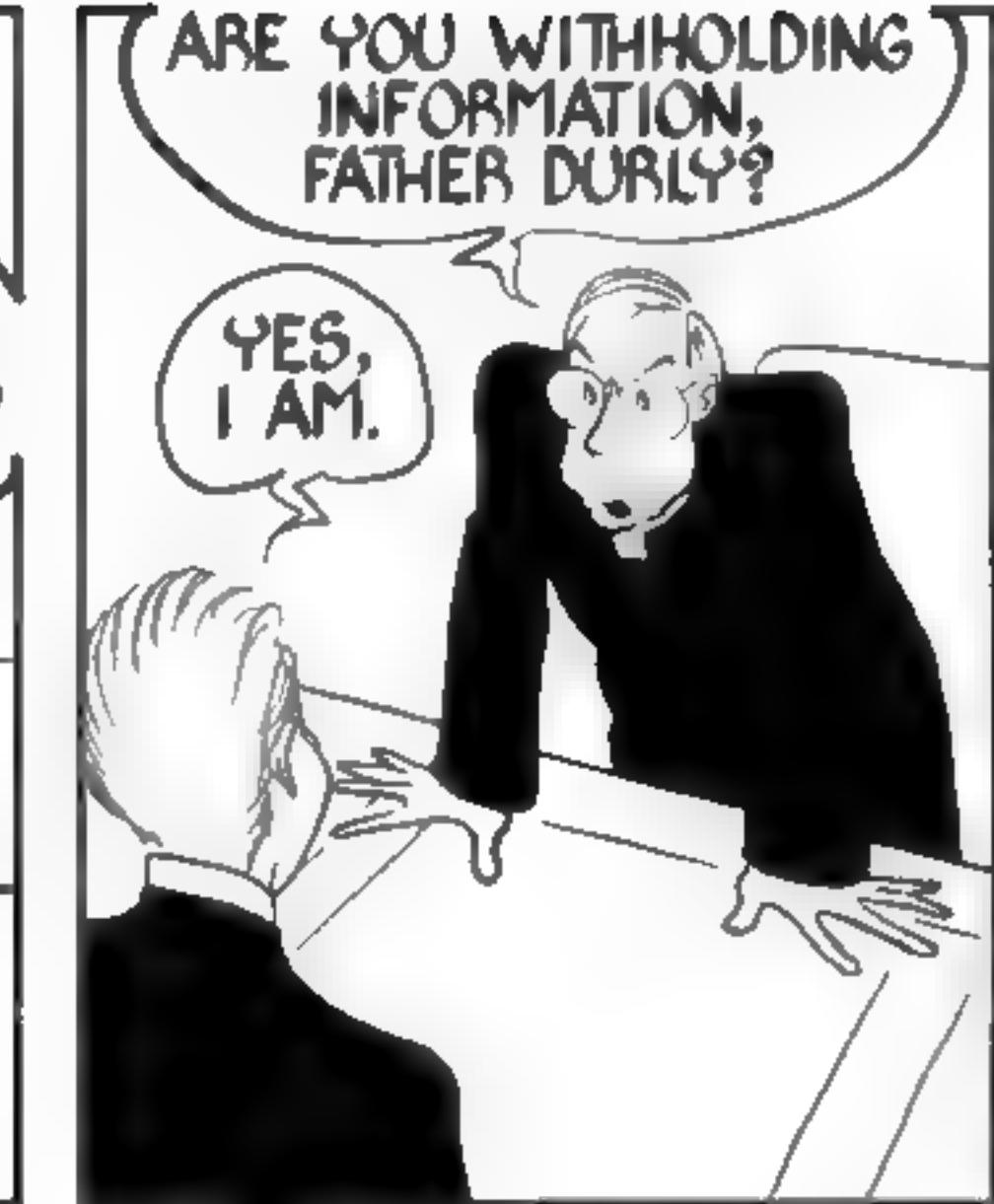
Brooke

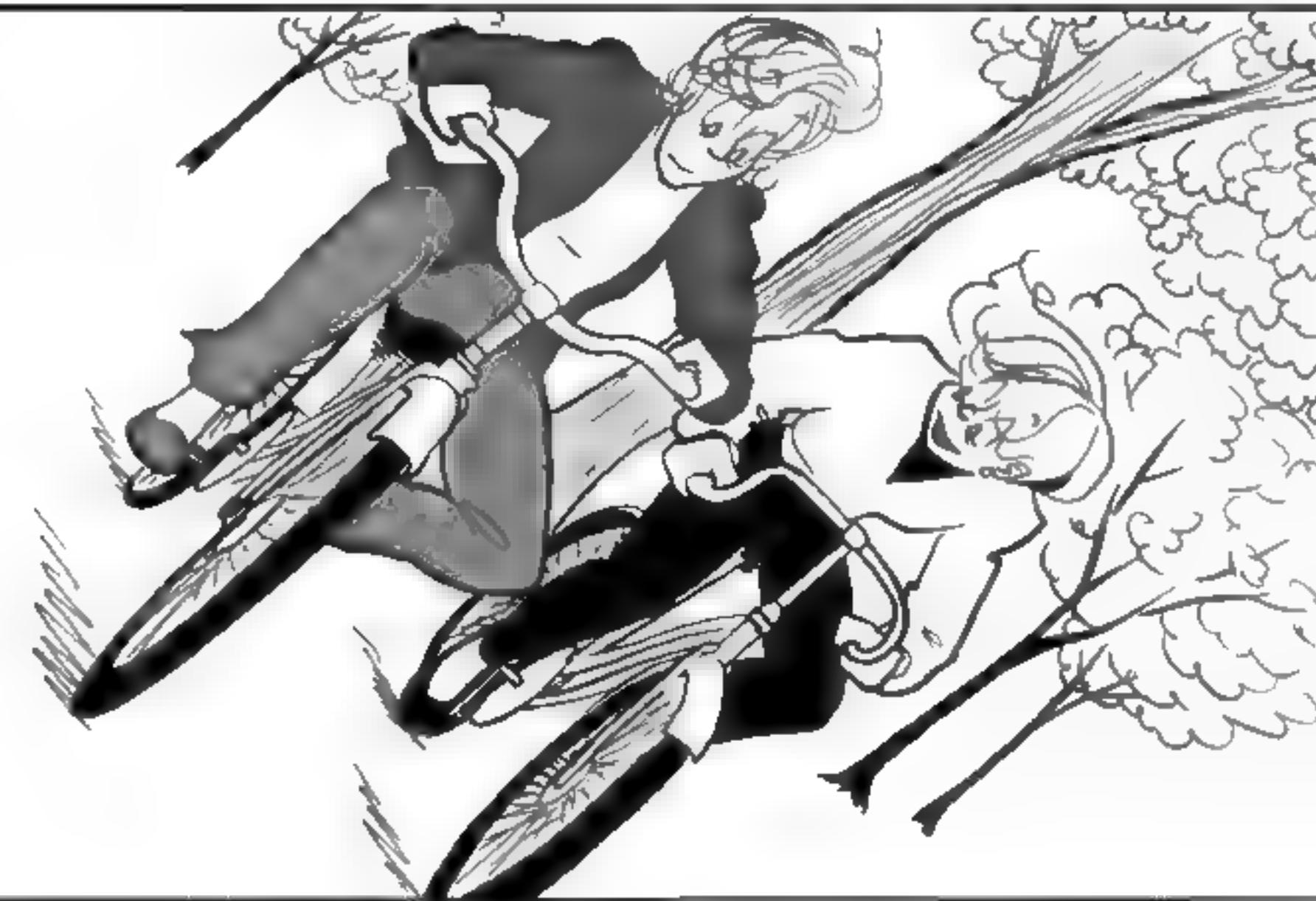
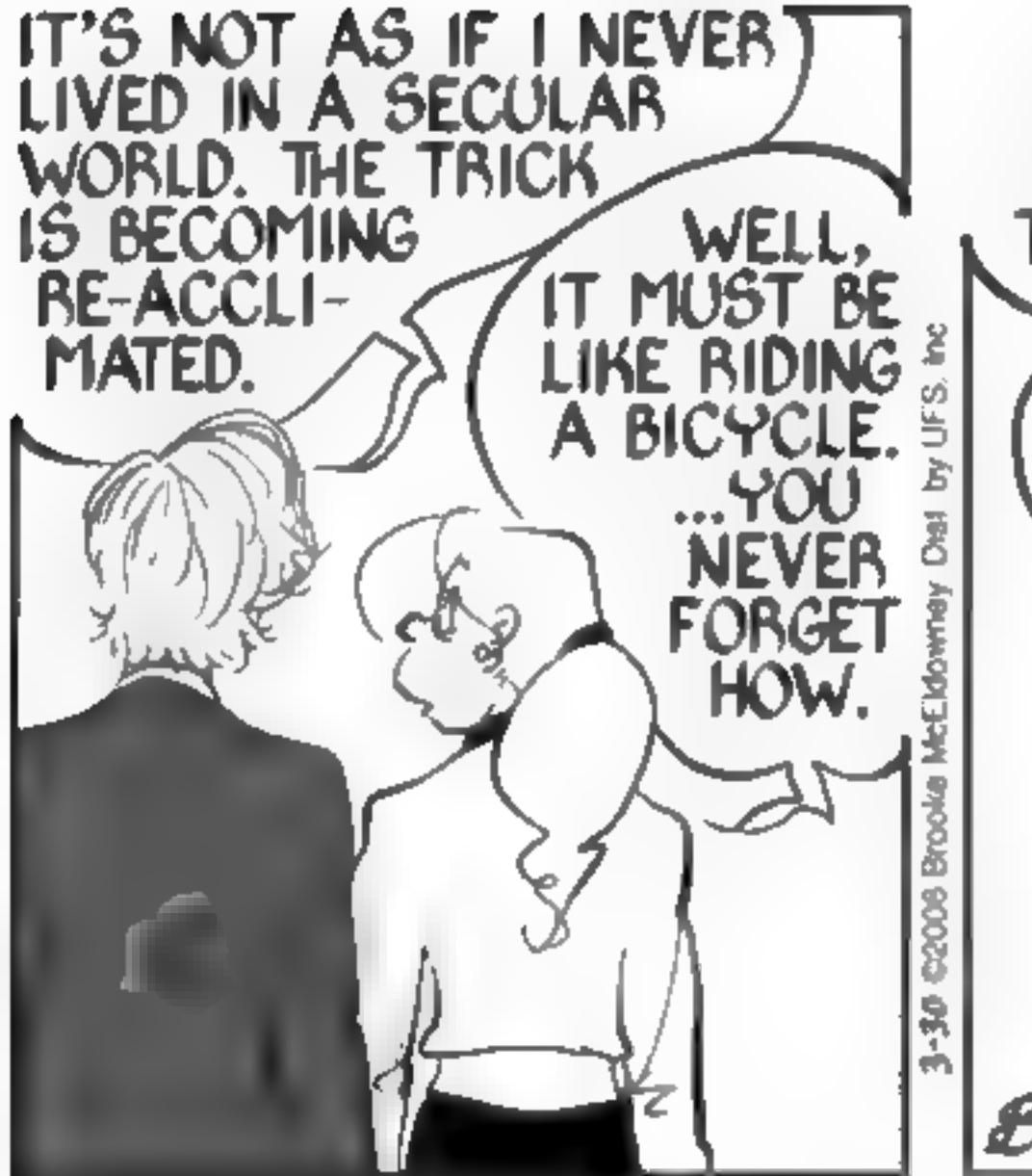




SO WHAT YOU'RE SAYING
IS, YOU MET A FARMER IN
NEW HAMPSHIRE WHO TOLD
YOU A FEW THINGS YOU
WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT GOD?

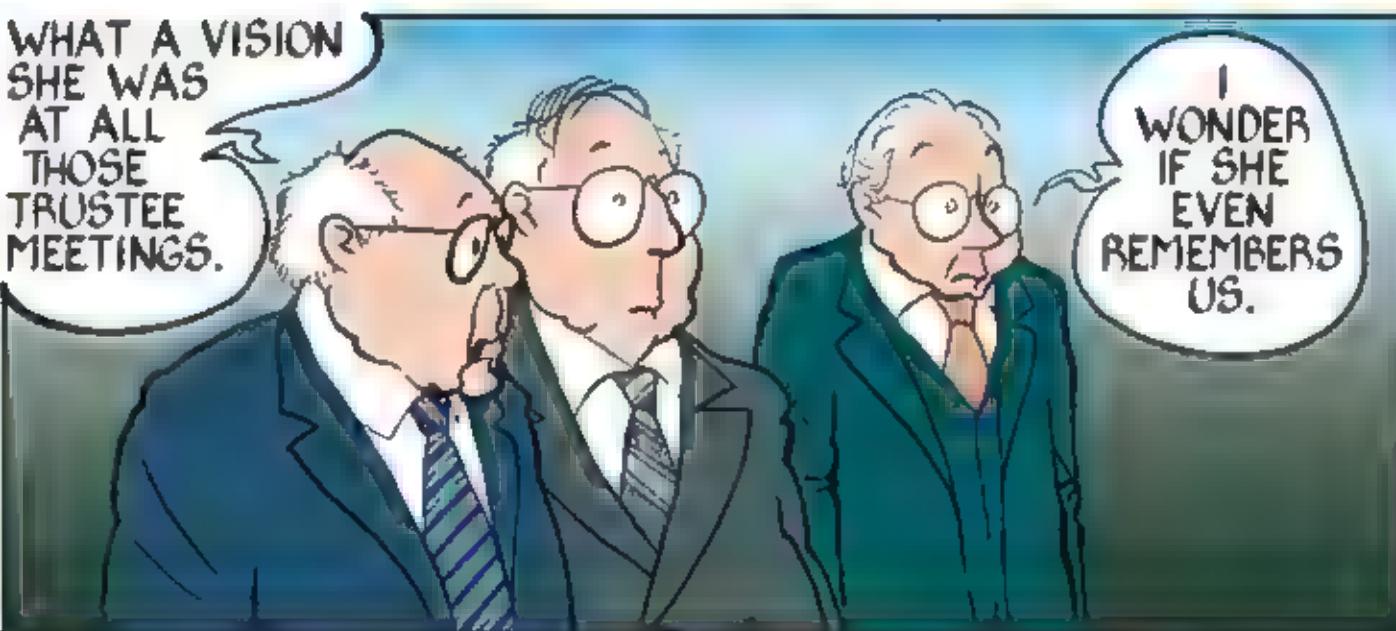












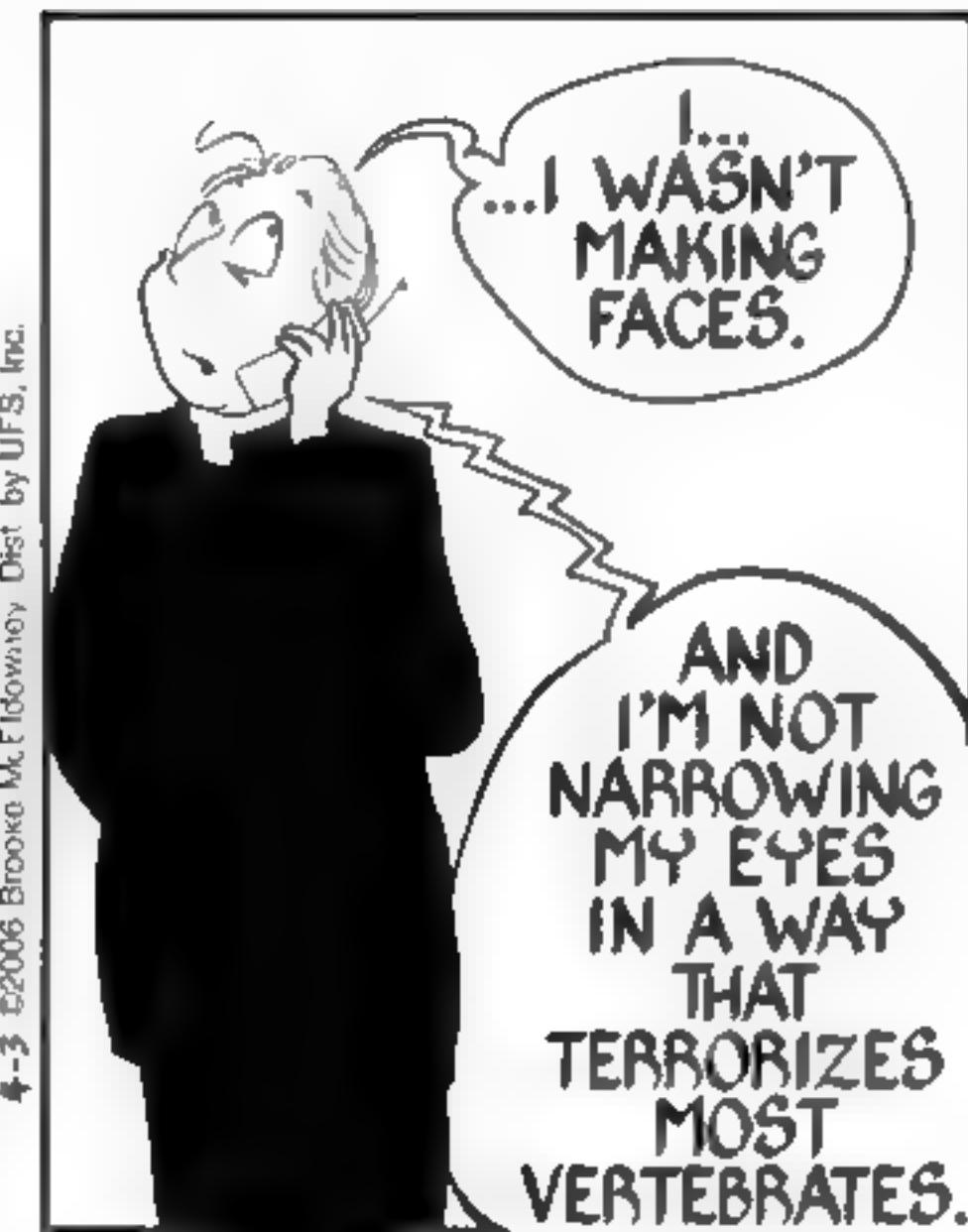
Brooke



Brooke



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WHAT DO YOU WANT OF
ME, SISTER CALIGULA?



I WANT
YOU
TO FIND A
FORMER
STUDENT
OF THIS
SCHOOL.

HER NAME IS EDDA BURBER.
SHE WAS CLOSE TO SISTER
ARAMUS, AND MAY KNOW
WHERE SHE IS.



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Brooke

HER TELEPHONE NUMBER IS
UNLISTED, AND THE BALLET
COMPANY WHERE SHE
WORKS WOULDN'T
DISCLOSE IT TO
ME OVER THE
PHONE.



AND DON'T CALL ME
SISTER CALIGULA.



I'M QUITE ASTONISHED
THAT YOU SHOULD CALL ME
"SISTER CALIGULA," FATHER
DURLY. I EXPECT THAT SORT
OF THING FROM STUDENTS,
NOT FROM A MEMBER OF
THE CLERGY. I AM APPALLED
AND MORTIFIED AT YOUR
SHOCKING
LACK OF.....

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4-5

Brooke

...I, OH....HONESTLY,
SISTER...I'M SURE I DIDN'T...
...I MEAN...SISTER STEVEN,
"PLEASE.....YOU...I...THIS IS
ALL AN UNFORTUNATE
MISUNDER-....
...HELLO?...
...HELLO?

RATTLING
A CAGE,
SISTER?

EVERY ONCE
IN A WHILE,
I REALLY COULD DO
WITH A CIGARETTE.

on a dare

I'VE BEEN TRYING TO GET HOLD OF EDDA BURBER, BUT NO ONE IN THE BALLET COMPANY CAN SEEM TO HELP ME.

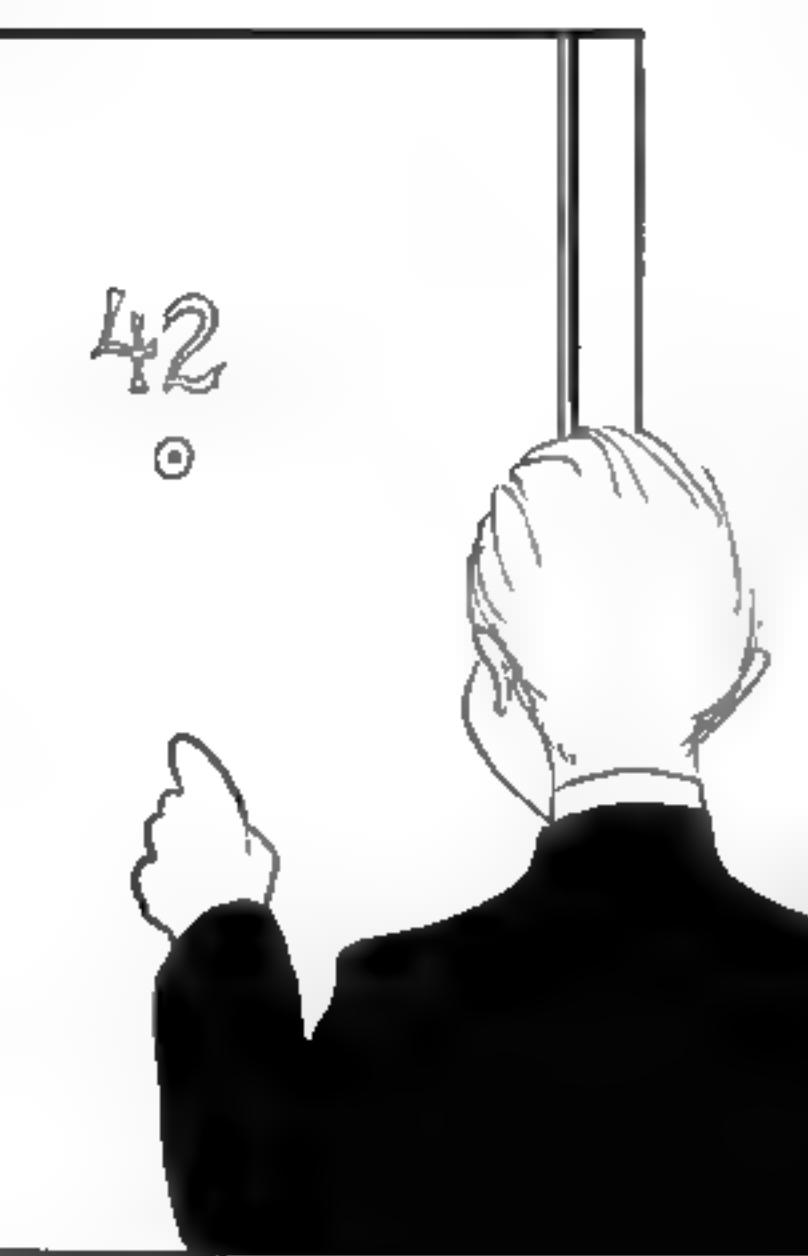


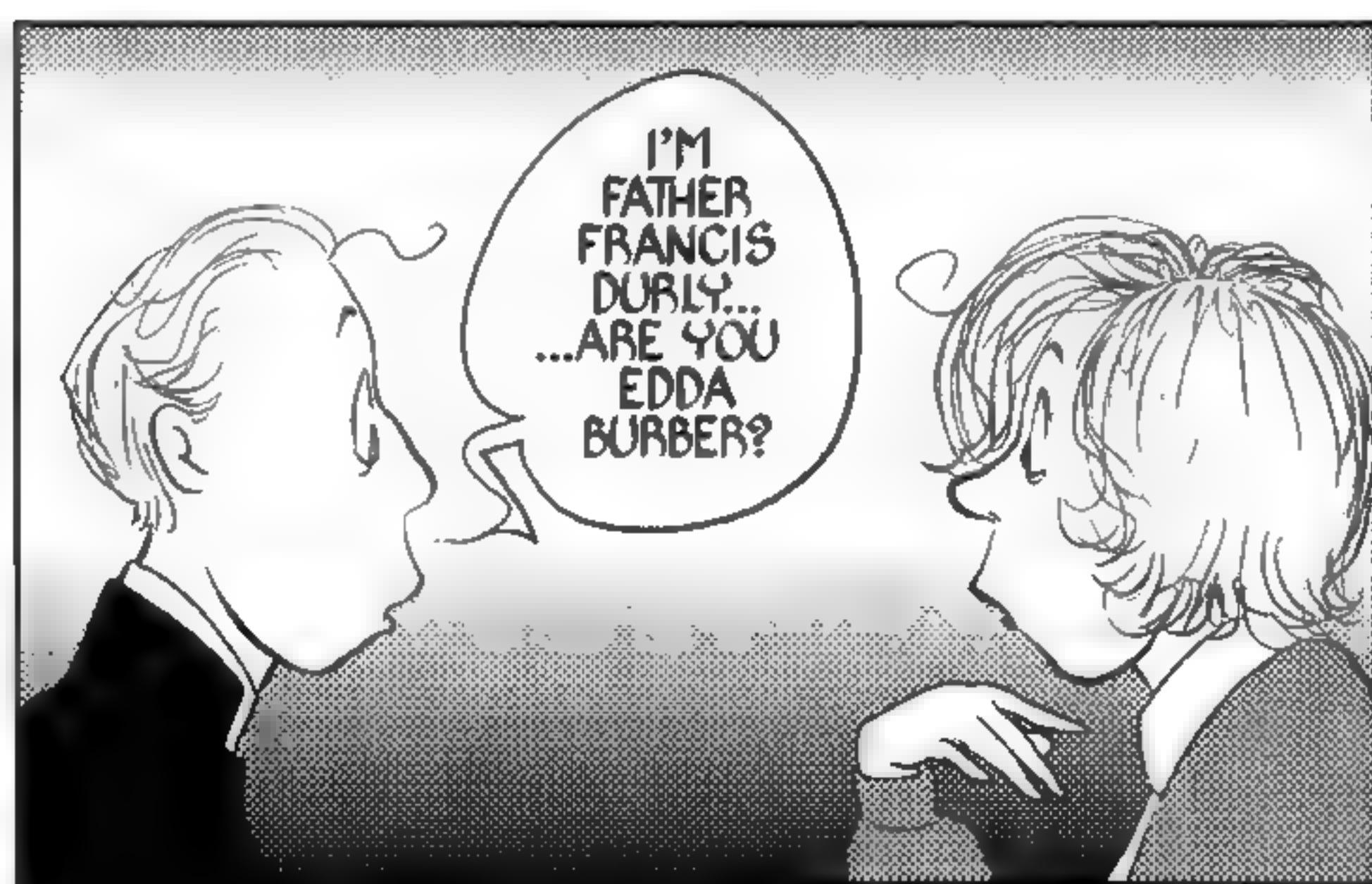
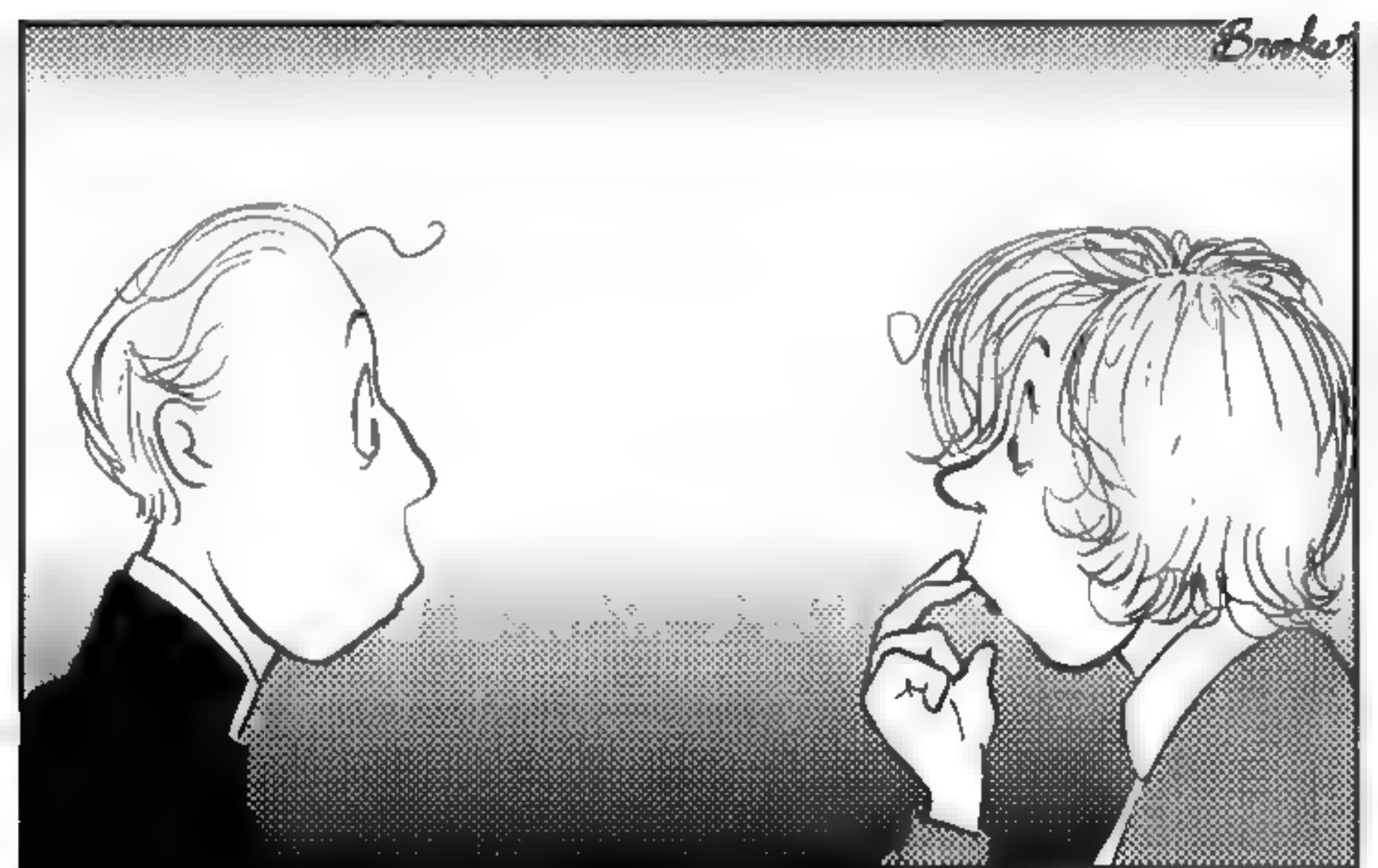
SHE'S GONE FOR THE EVENING, FATHER, AND WE'RE NOT ALLOWED TO GIVE OUT TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

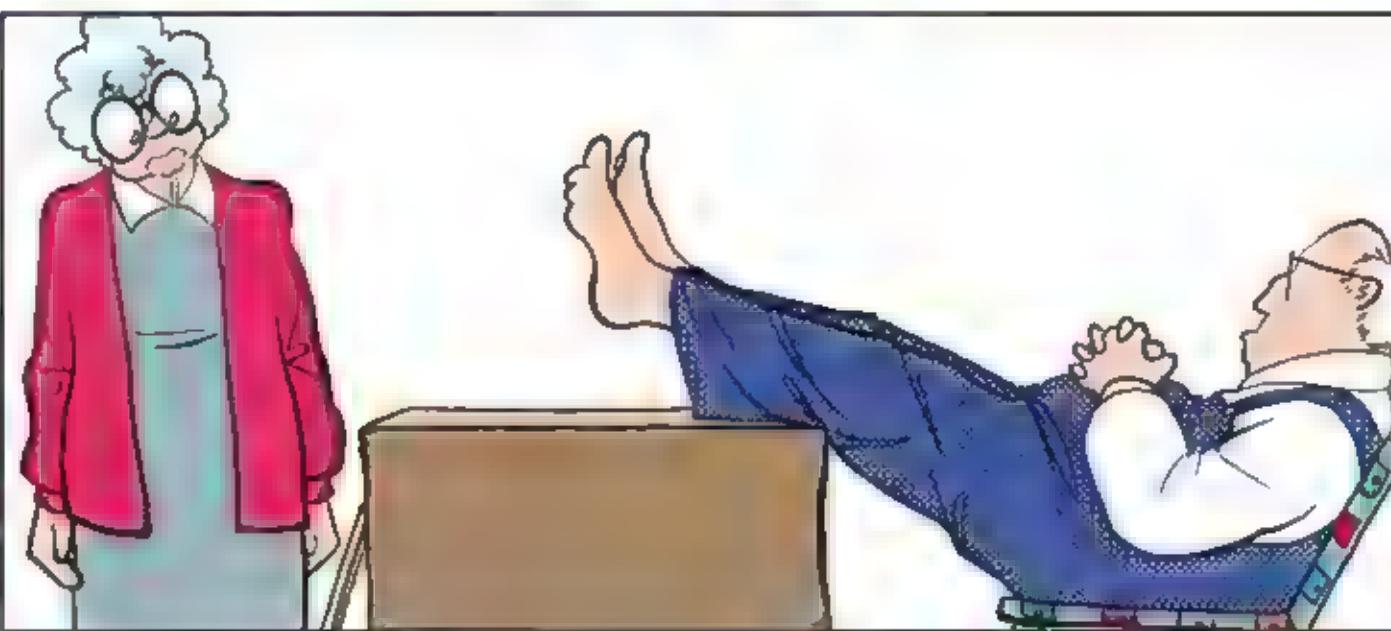
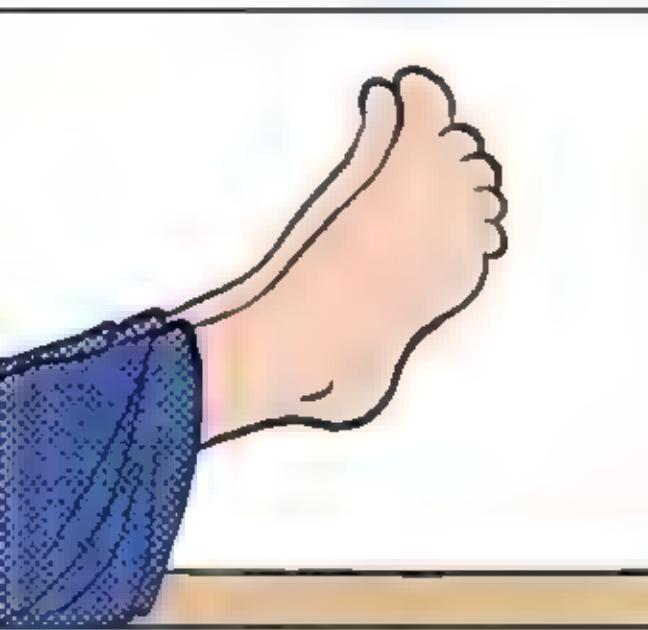


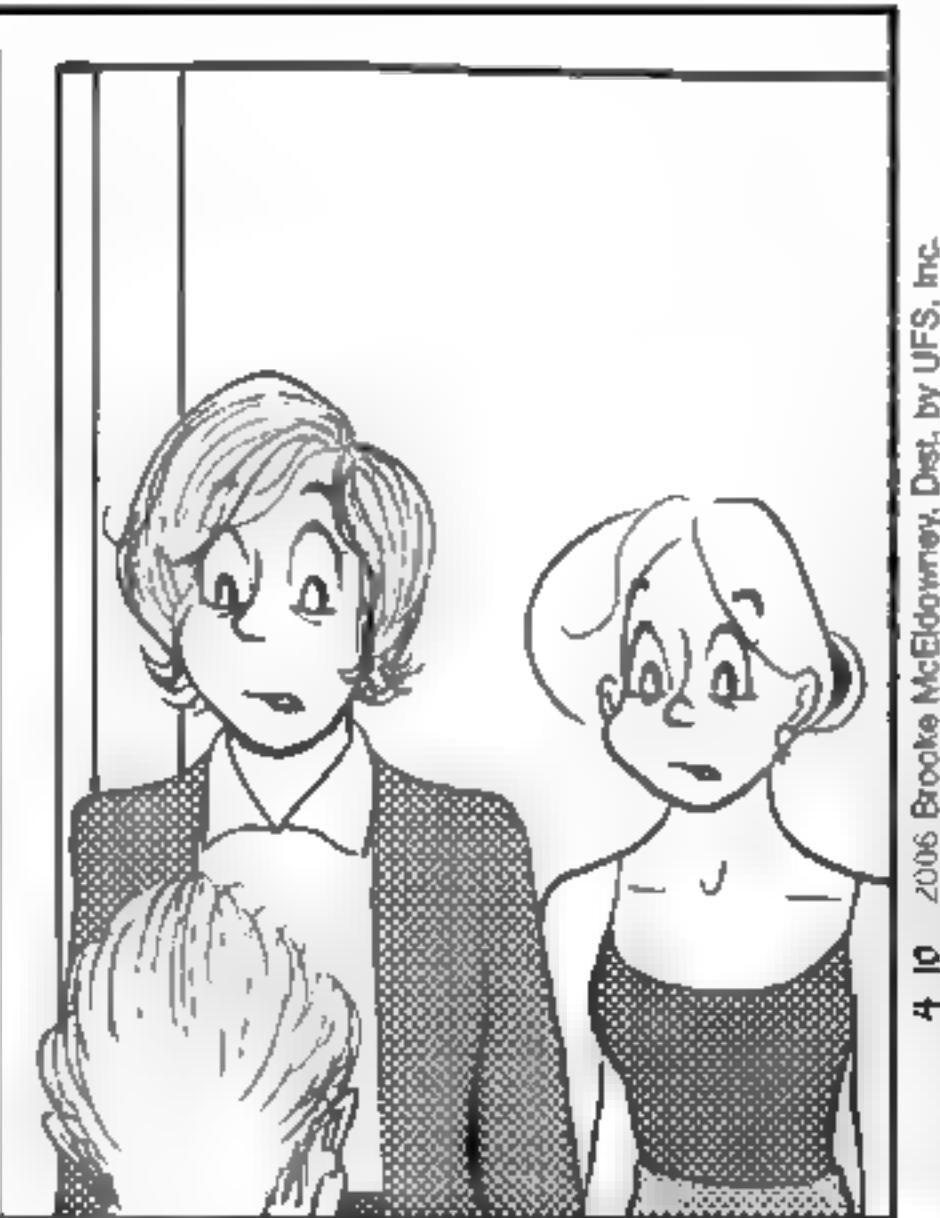
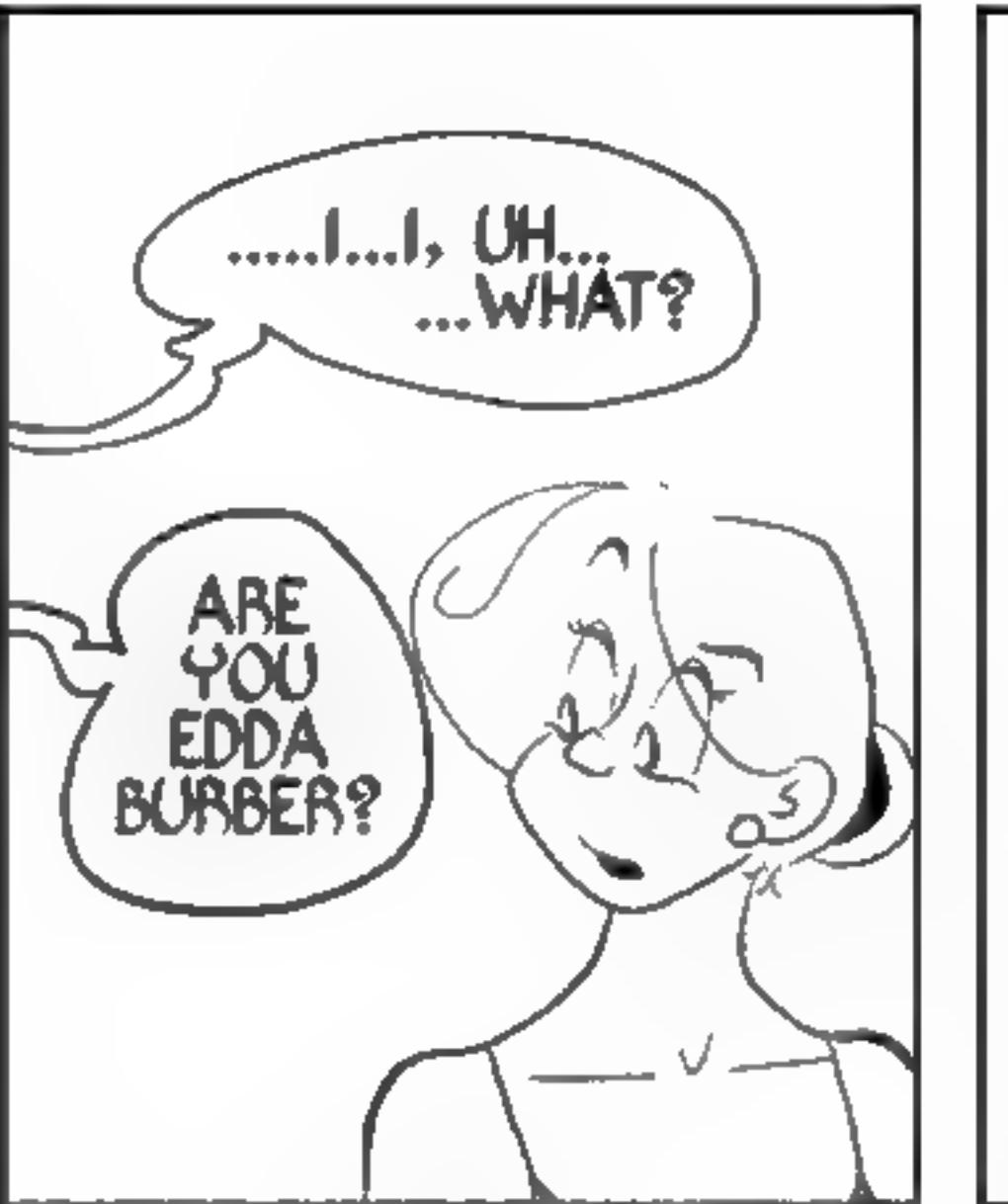
...IF YOU WERE TO HAPPEN TO NOTICE THE LIST OF ADDRESSES ON MY DESK, AND YOU CAN READ UPSIDE DOWN...











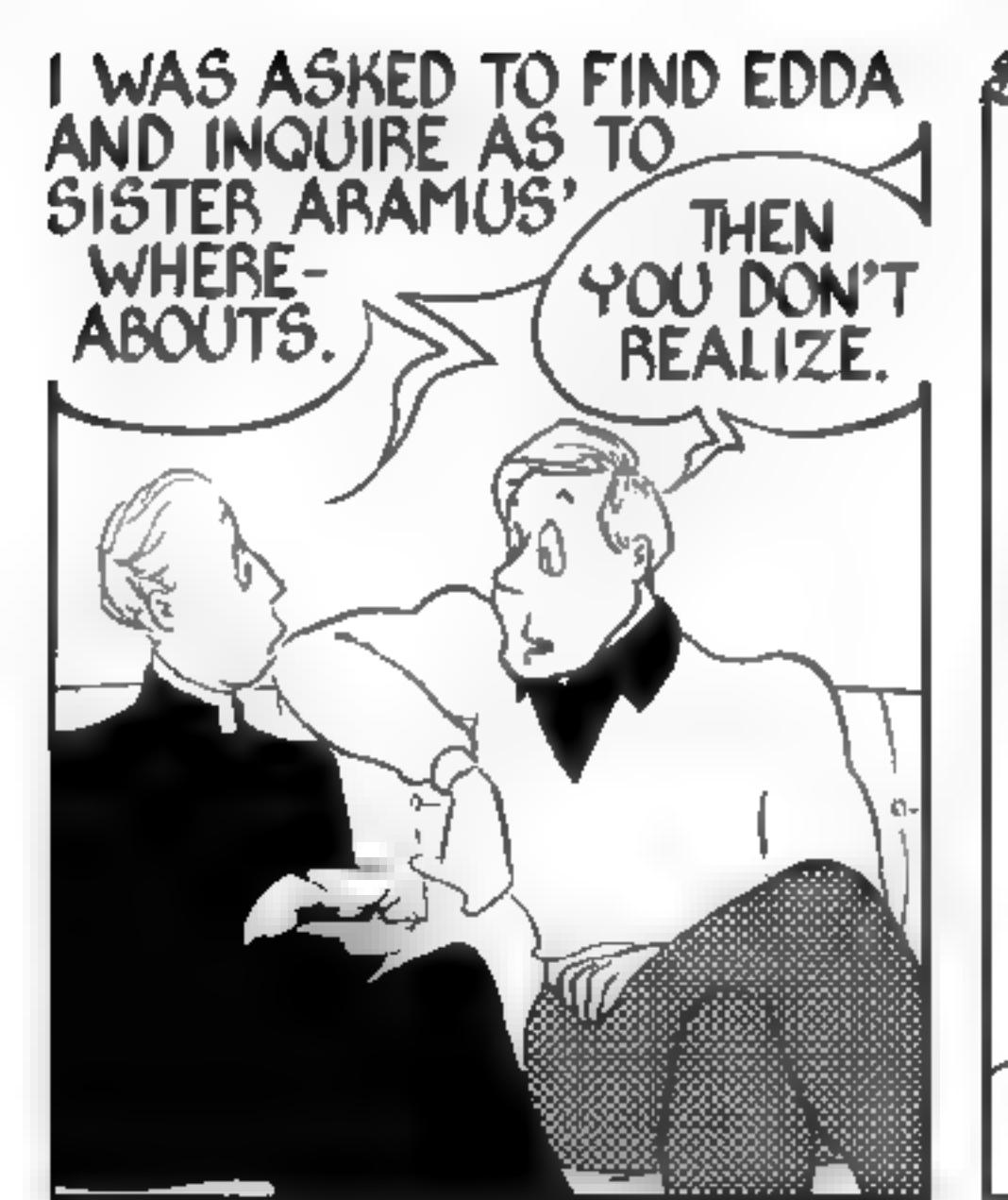




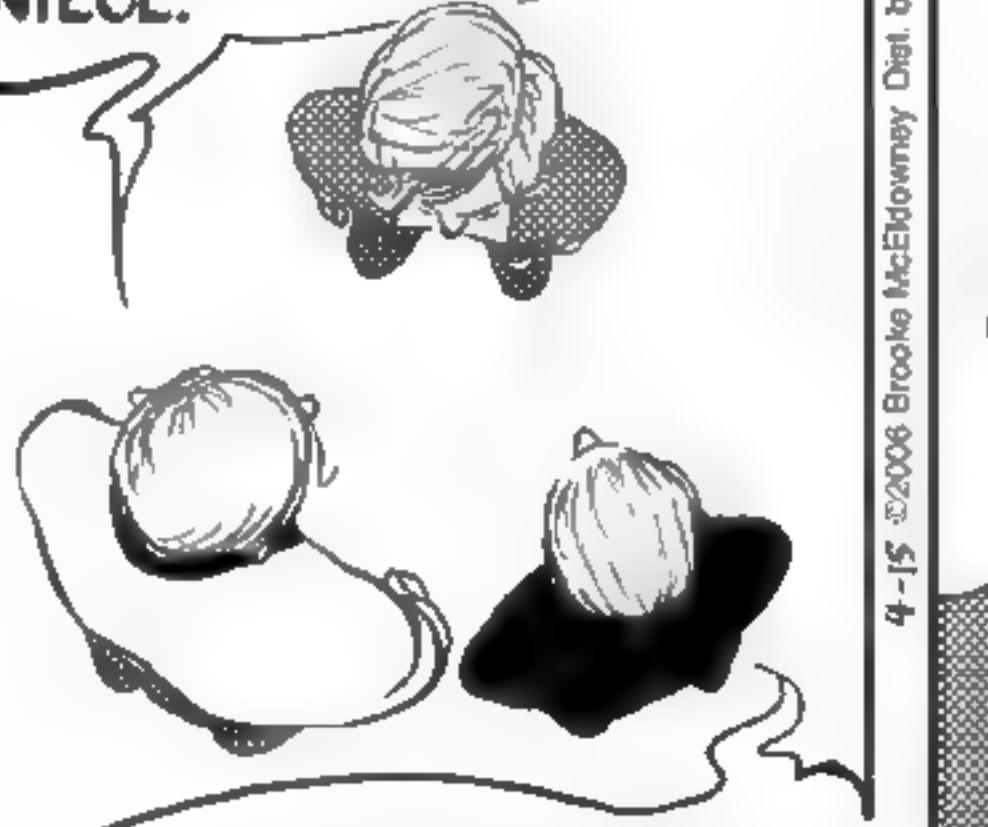


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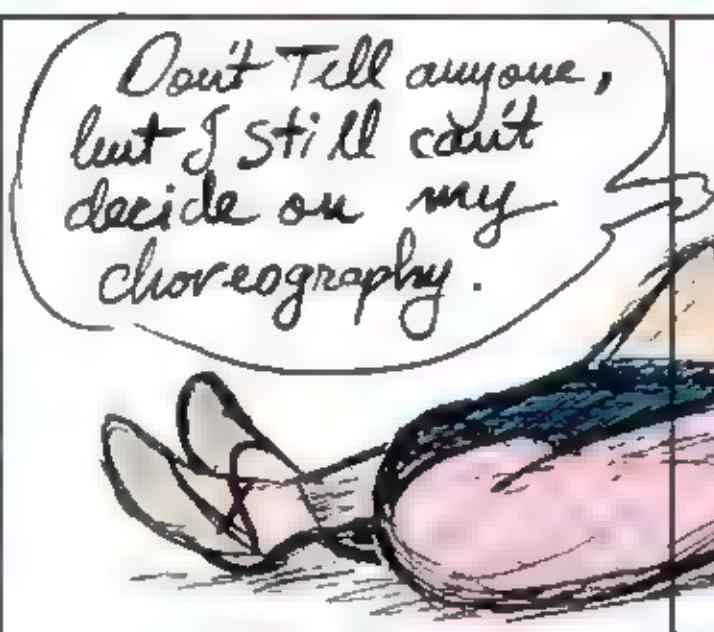
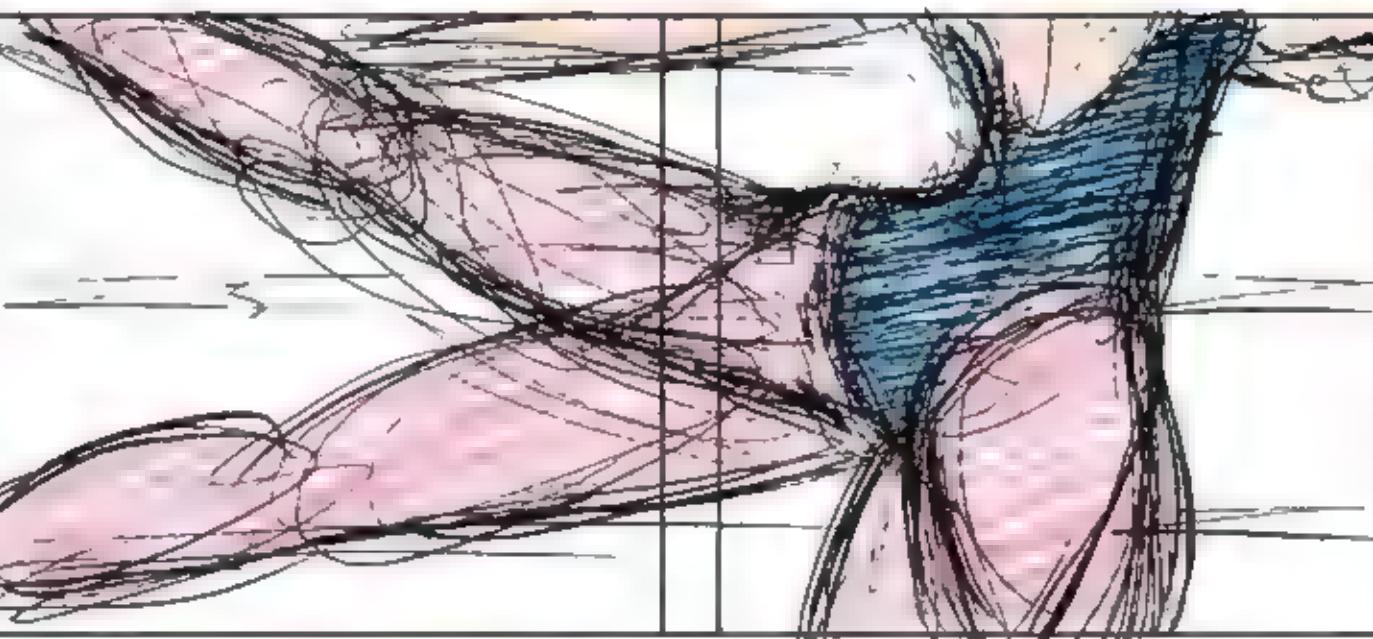
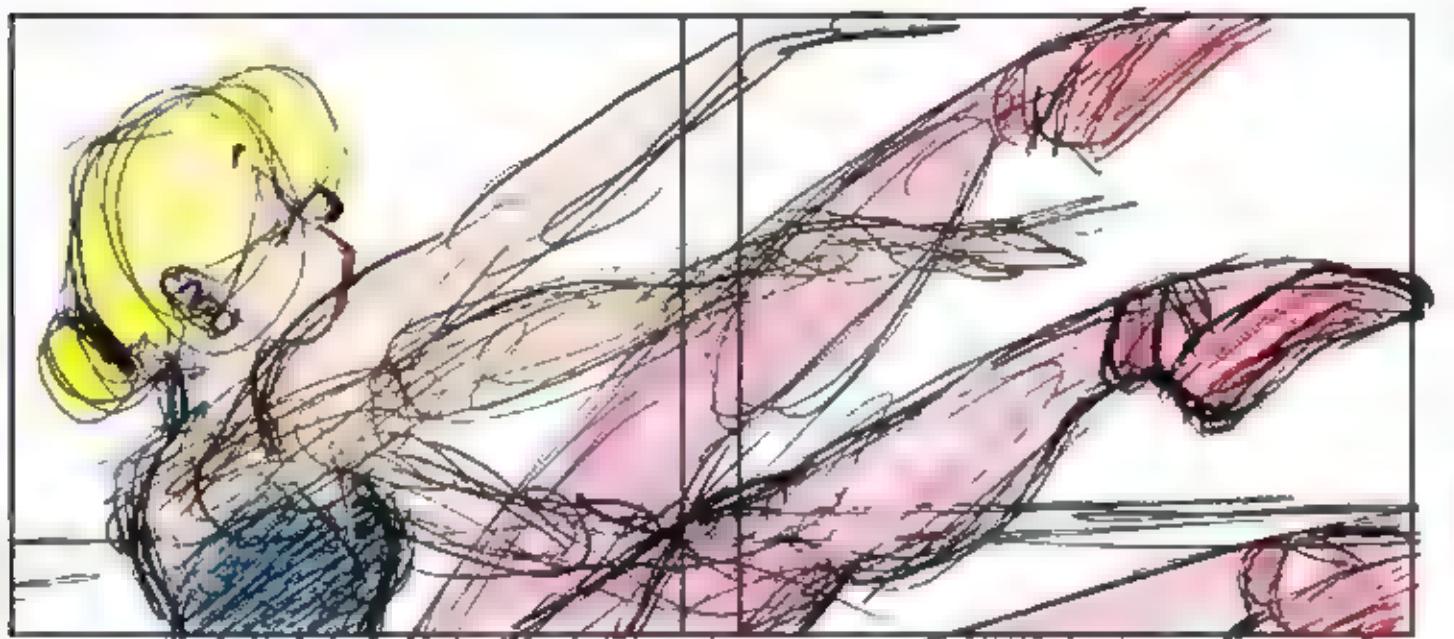


THIS IS DIANE FALLON...
...SISTER ARAMUS'
NIECE.



OH, WELL, THIS IS
FORTUITOUS. IT'S NICE
TO MEET YOU, MISS FALLON.







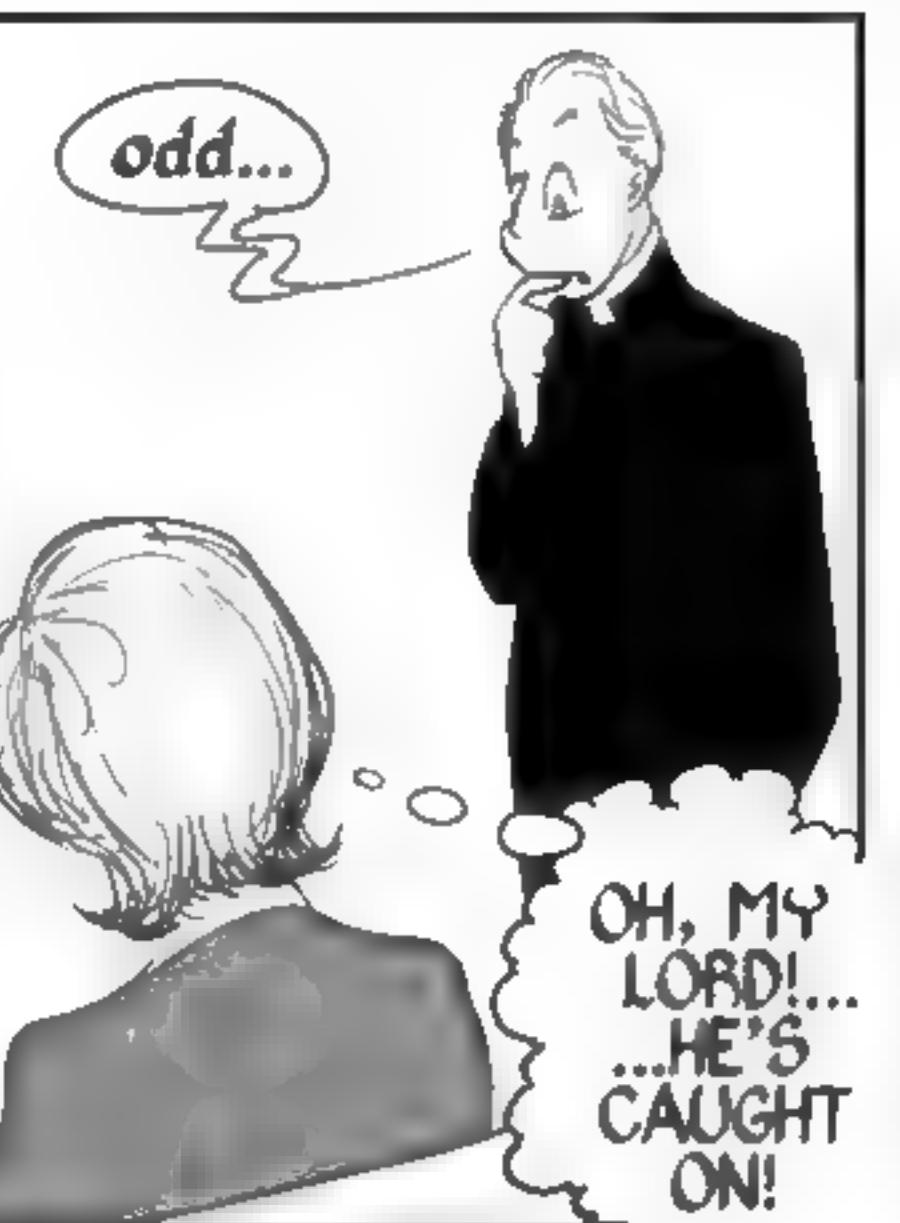
ARE YOU AND YOUR AUNT VERY CLOSE?

WELL, SOMETIMES WE DON'T SPEAK FOR A WHILE, BUT WE ALWAYS CATCH UP.

WE'RE MORE LIKE FRIENDS. I MEAN, WE BOTH SHARE THE SAME NAME, WE'RE NOT THAT FAR APART IN AGE...AND PEOPLE TELL US WE LOOK A LOT ALIKE.



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IT MUST BE THE DIFFERENCE
IN YOUR AGES AND SIZE.
YOUR AUNT IS
MUCH TALLER,
AND DEFINITELY
OLDER LOOKING.



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SHE'S
NOT ALL
THAT MUCH
OLDER.
ONLY NINE
YEARS.



YES,
BUT IT CAN
MAKE A BIG
DIFFERENCE...



...SOMETIMES
A REALLY
DECIDED
CONTRAST
IN AGE...
...PLAIN
TO SEE...
...I MEAN,
JUST THE
EYES
ALONE...

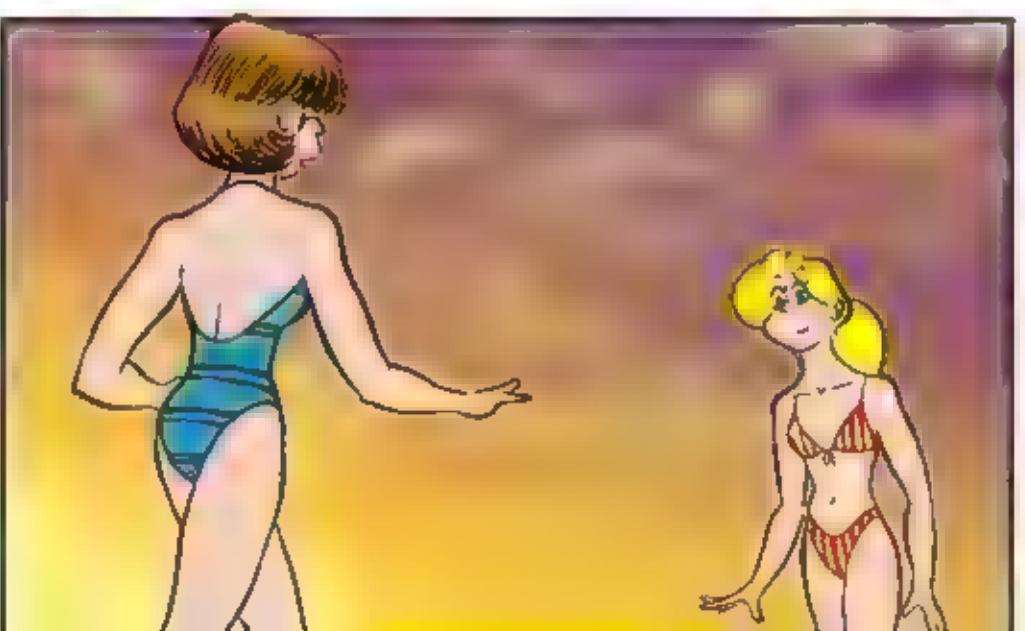
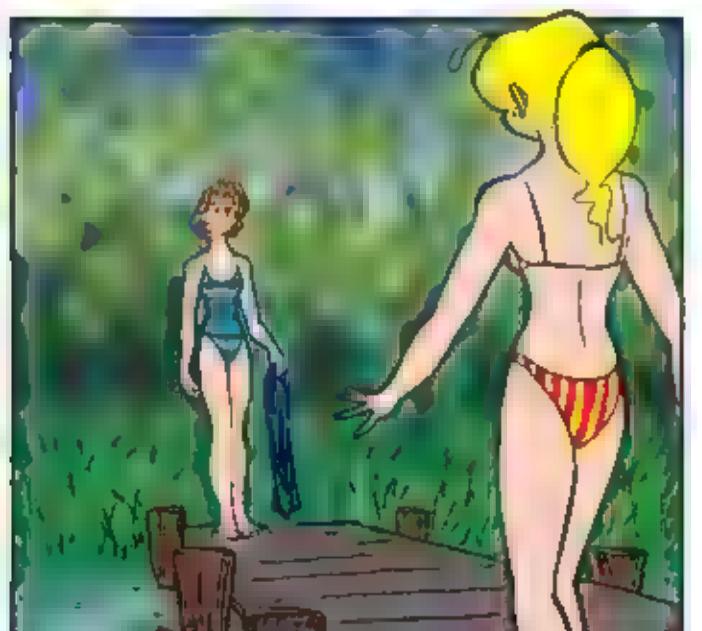
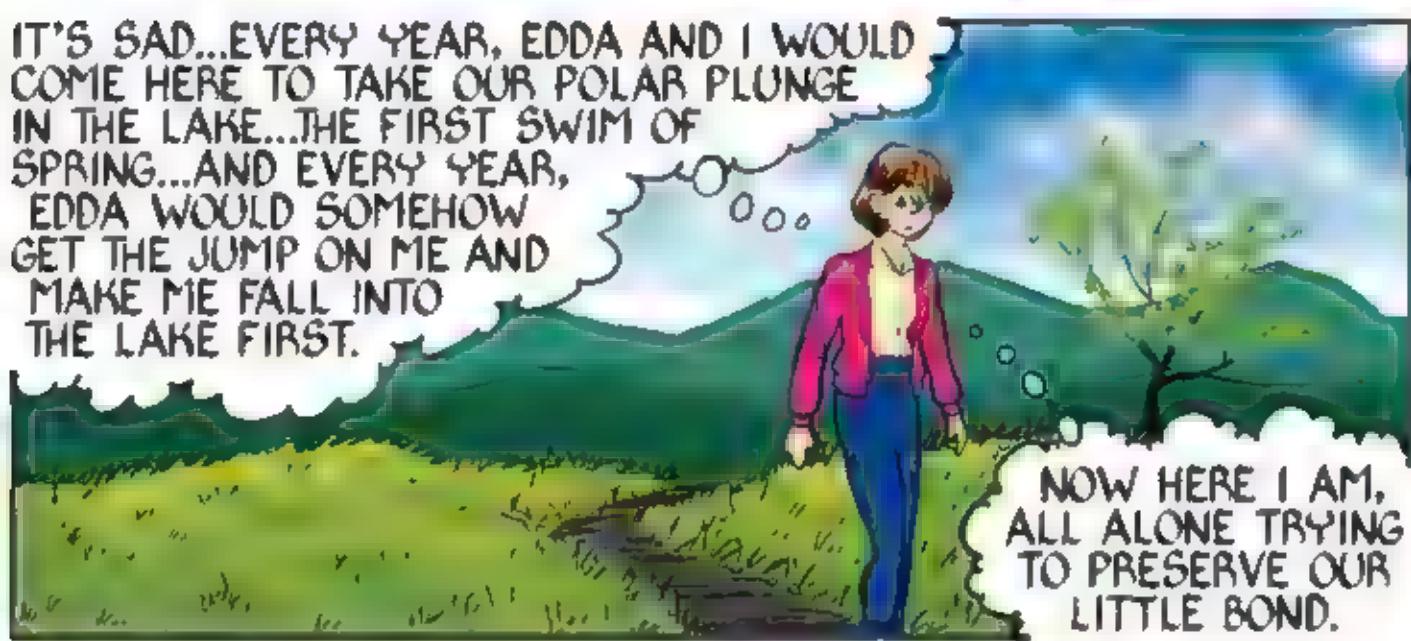
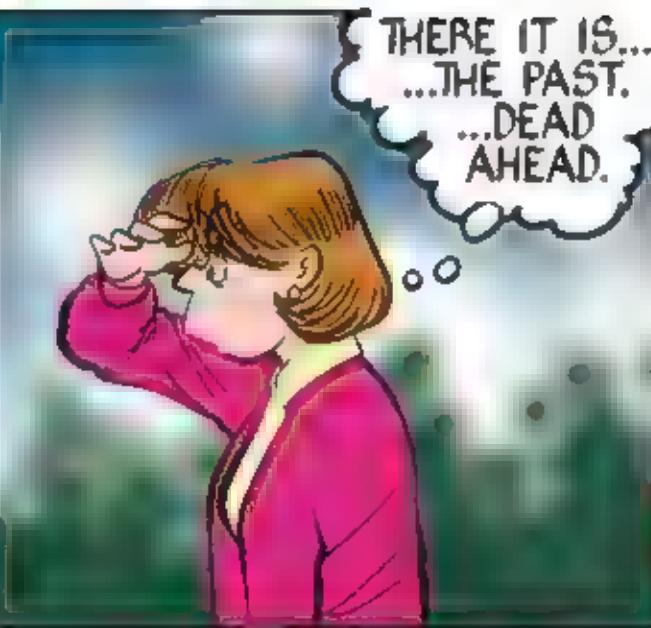


RIGHT, RIGHT!
SHE'S GETTING
UP THERE!
AN OLD BAT!
MESSAGE
RECEIVED AND
NOTED, LOUD
AND CLEAR!
ROGER, TEN-FOUR,
OVER AND
OUT!...

Brooke











I HEAR
AN EPIPHANY
COMING.



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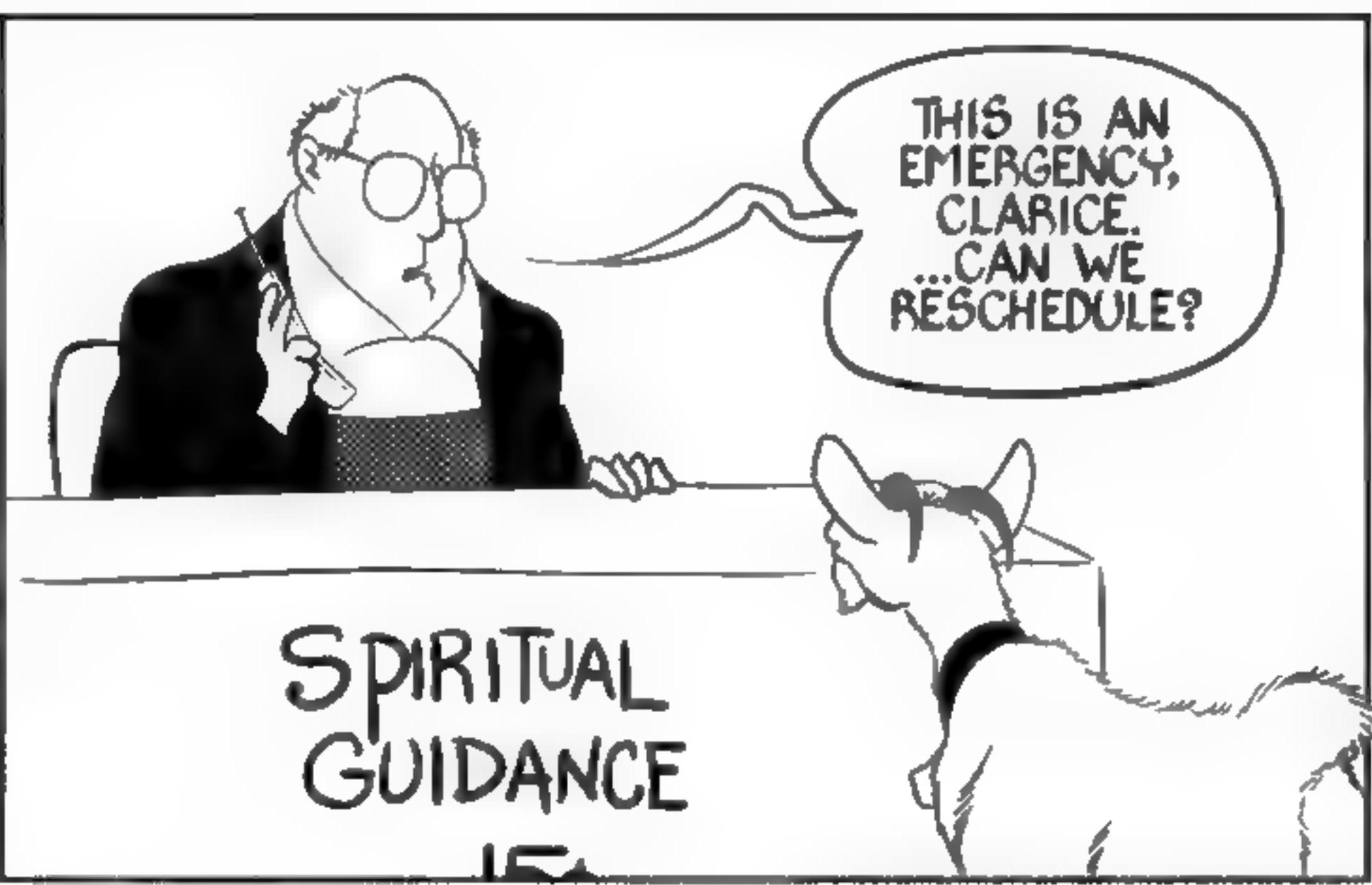
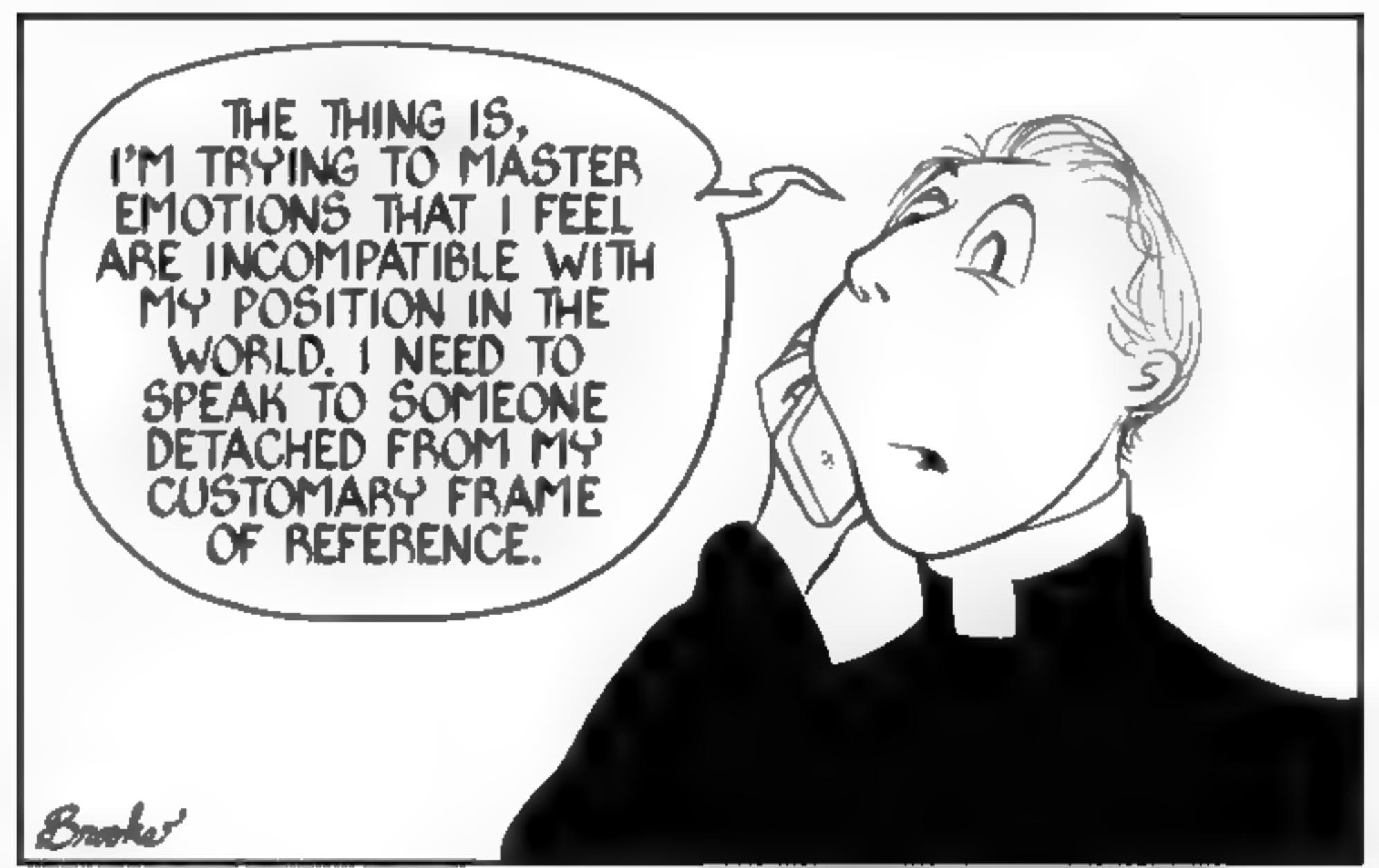
Brooke





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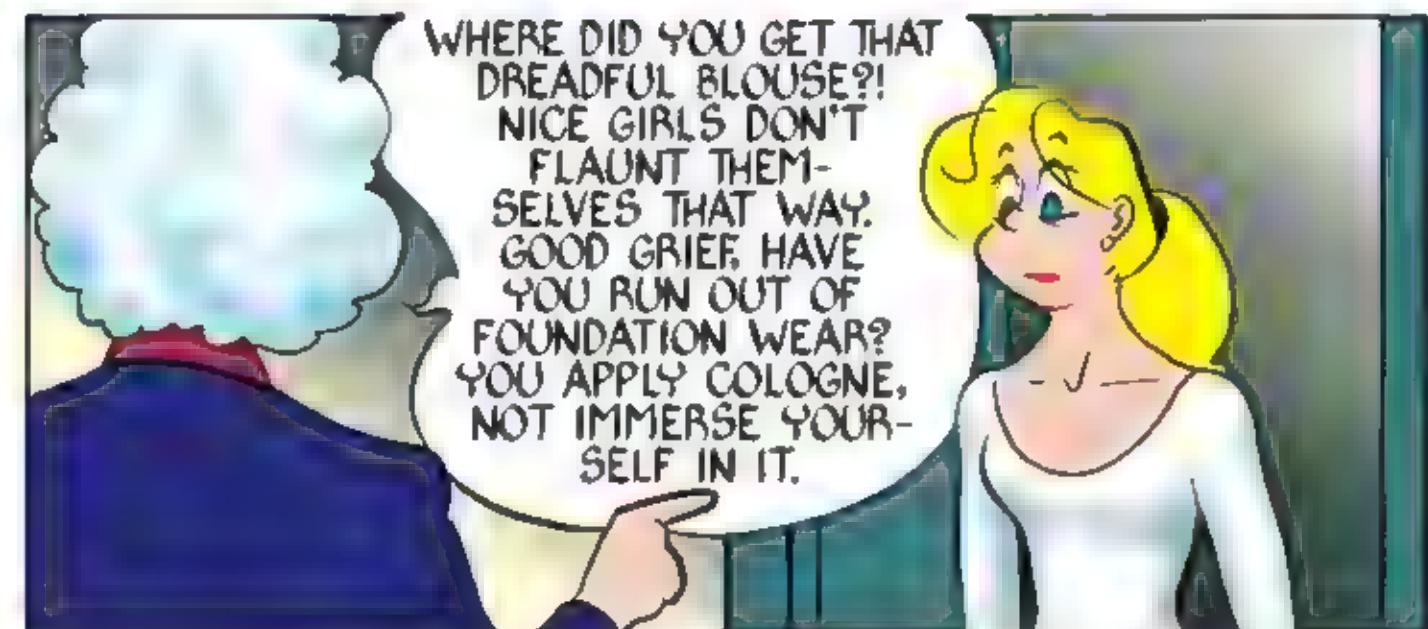
I HAVE TO STRESS, THIS
IS AN ISSUE OF EXTREME
DELICACY. I DON'T EVEN
KNOW IF I SHOULD BE
SPEAKING OVER THIS
PHONE.

JUST A SECOND...
I'LL HAVE THE SIGNAL
ENCRYPTED.

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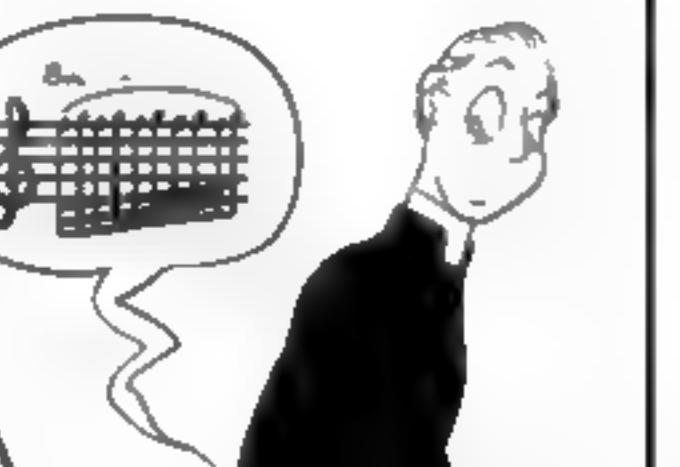
Brooke

CONTINUE.



I'M SORRY, MR. THORAX,
BUT I THINK I NEED TO
SEEK GUIDANCE FROM
SOMEONE
OF MY
OWN
FAITH.

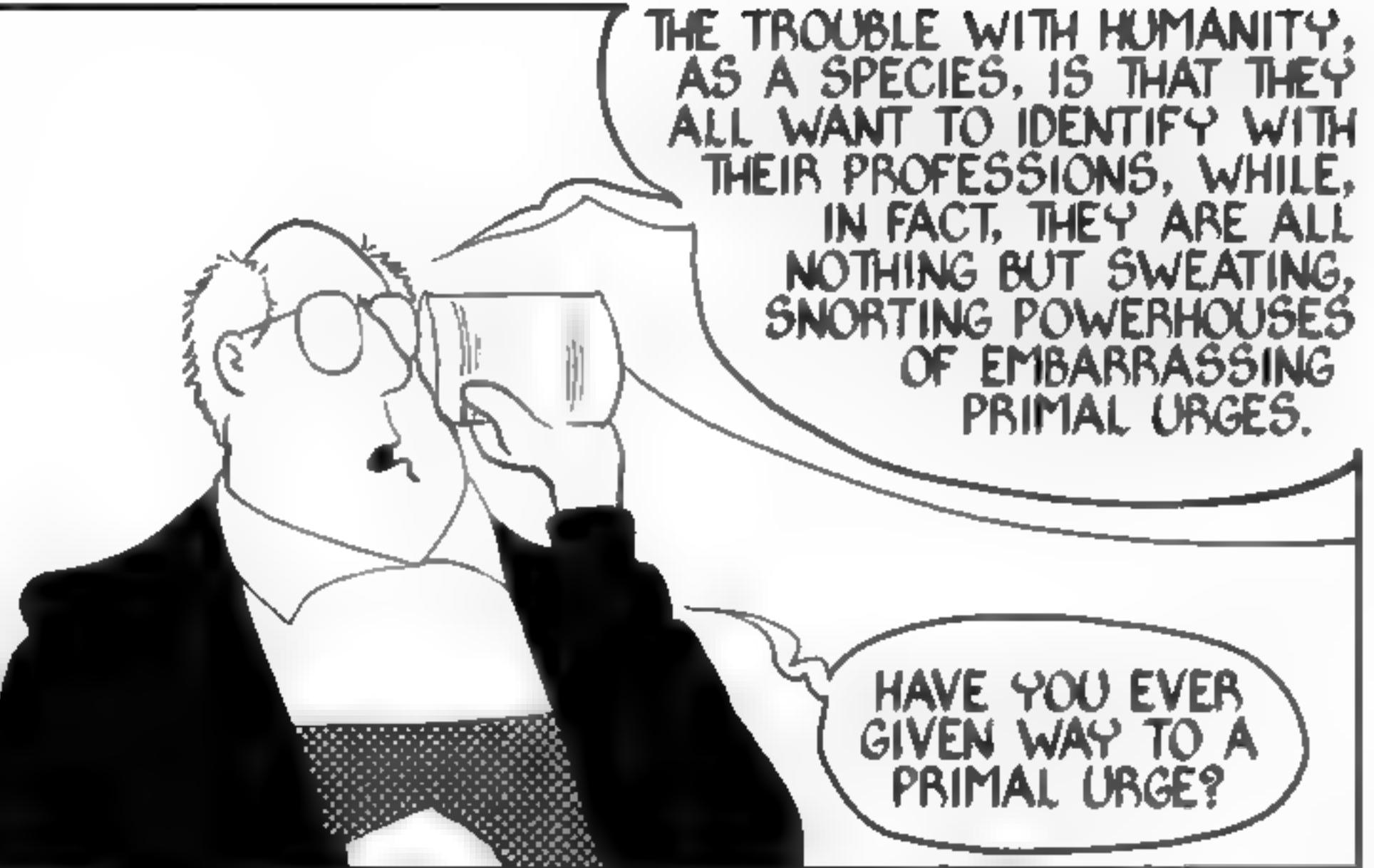
AS
YOU
WISH,
MY CHILD.



FATHER
DURLY?
SISTER
STEVEN
HERE...

THORAX...
...WHEN CAN
WE BEGIN?

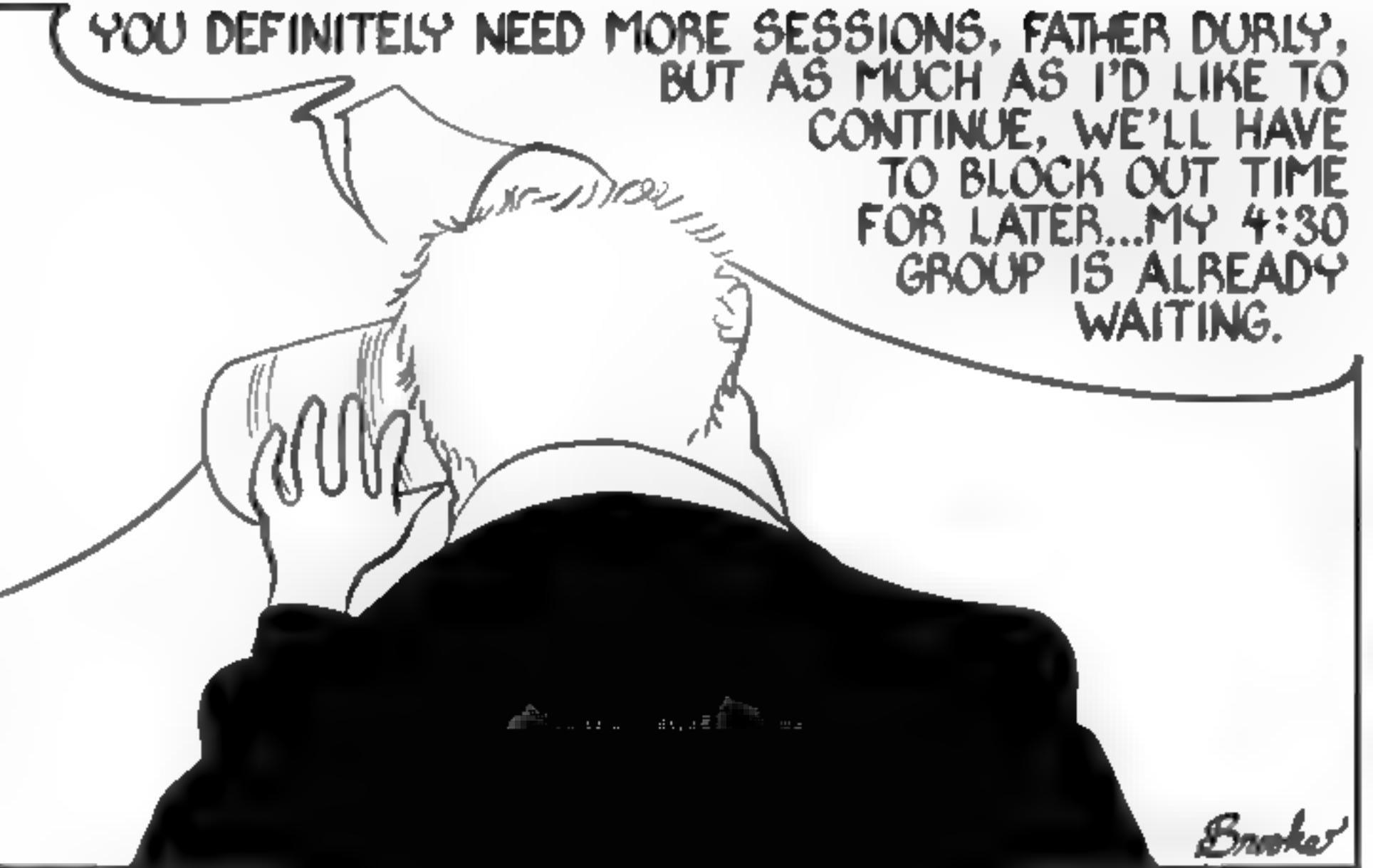
Brock



IN MY CONSIDERED OPINION,
FATHER DURLY, THE PRO-
FESSIONAL/INTELLECTUAL
YOU AND THE PRIMAL YOU
ARE IN CONFLICT, GROWING
FURTHER APART AS...

...HOLD ON...I THINK MY
LINE IS BEING TAPPED.





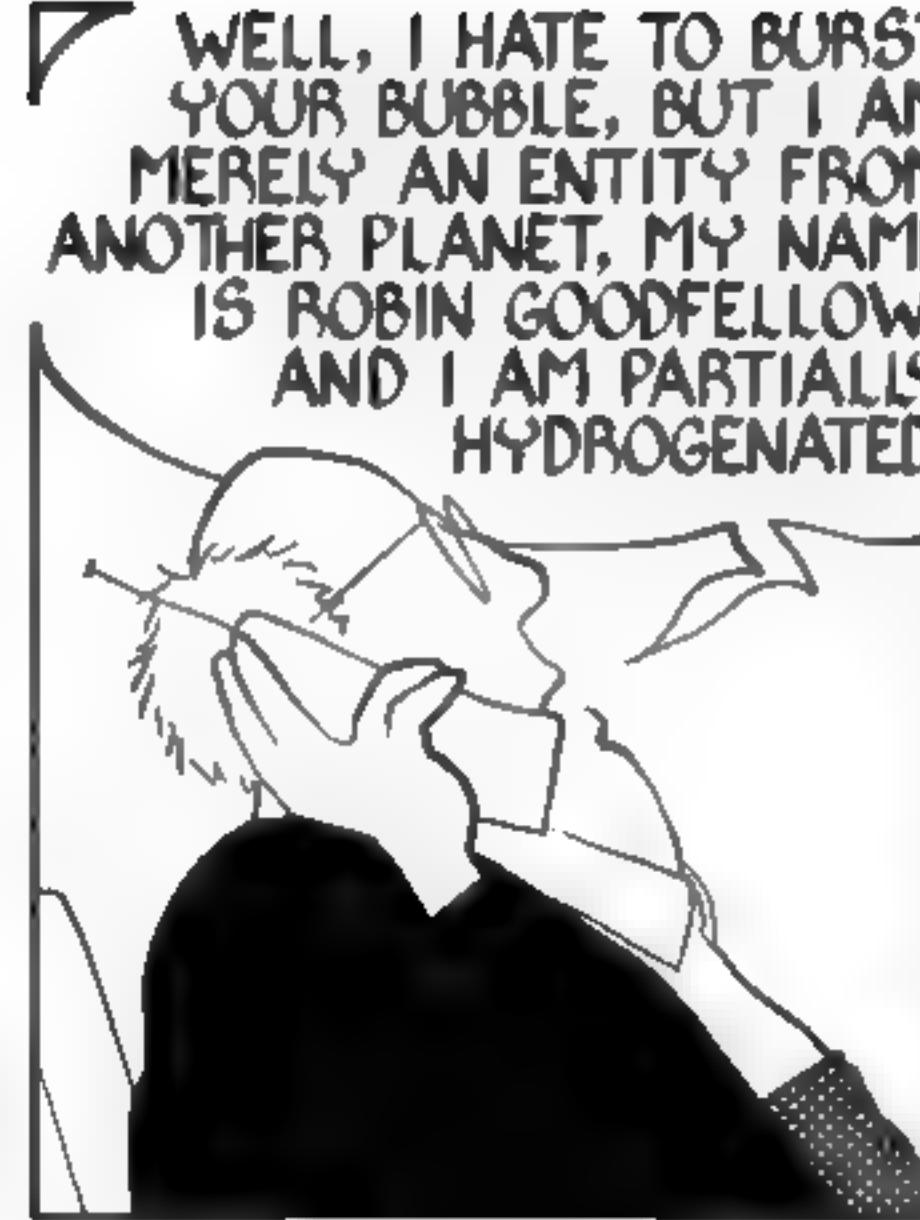
I'VE JUST BEEN FEELING
THE NEED TO TALK TO
SOMEONE ABOUT WHAT'S
GOING ON IN MY LIFE.
THEN A FRIEND TOLD ME
THAT YOU ARE...
...YOU
ARE...



...AN OLD COOT WITH A
MODICUM OF WISDOM
TO DISPENSE, WHILE BEING
JUST BONKERS ENOUGH
THAT NOBODY WILL LISTEN
TO ME IF I BREAK OUR
PACT OF CONFIDENTIALITY?



WELL, I HATE TO BURST
YOUR BUBBLE, BUT I AM
MERELY AN ENTITY FROM
ANOTHER PLANET, MY NAME
IS ROBIN GOODFELLOW,
AND I AM PARTIALLY
HYDROGENATED.



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Brooke

WHEN CAN WE
BEGIN?



SO HE SAID MAYBE WE'D RUN INTO EACH OTHER...
...AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, I SAID MAYBE IN CENTRAL PARK, AND HE SAID PERHAPS AT THE BETHESDA TERRACE.



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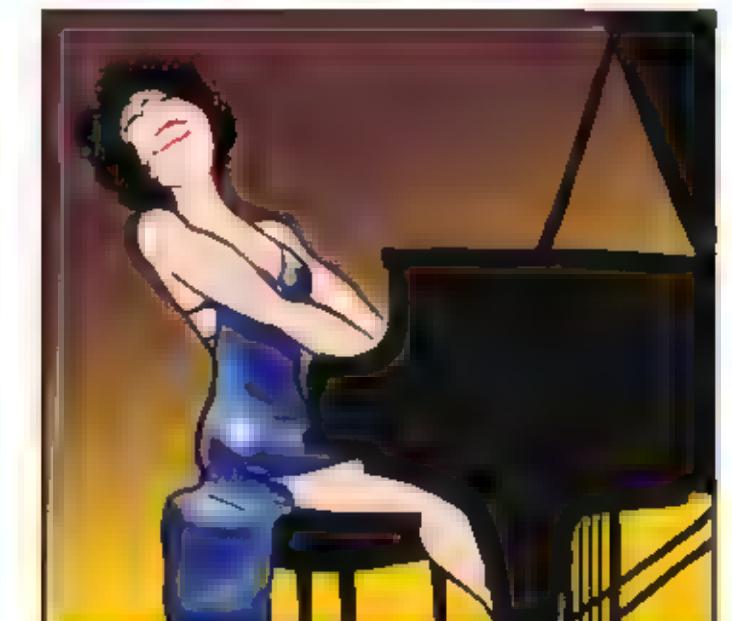
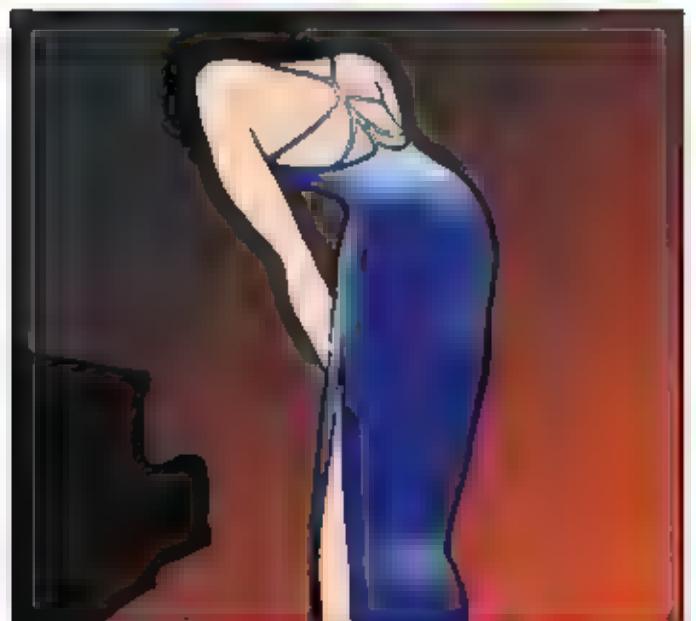
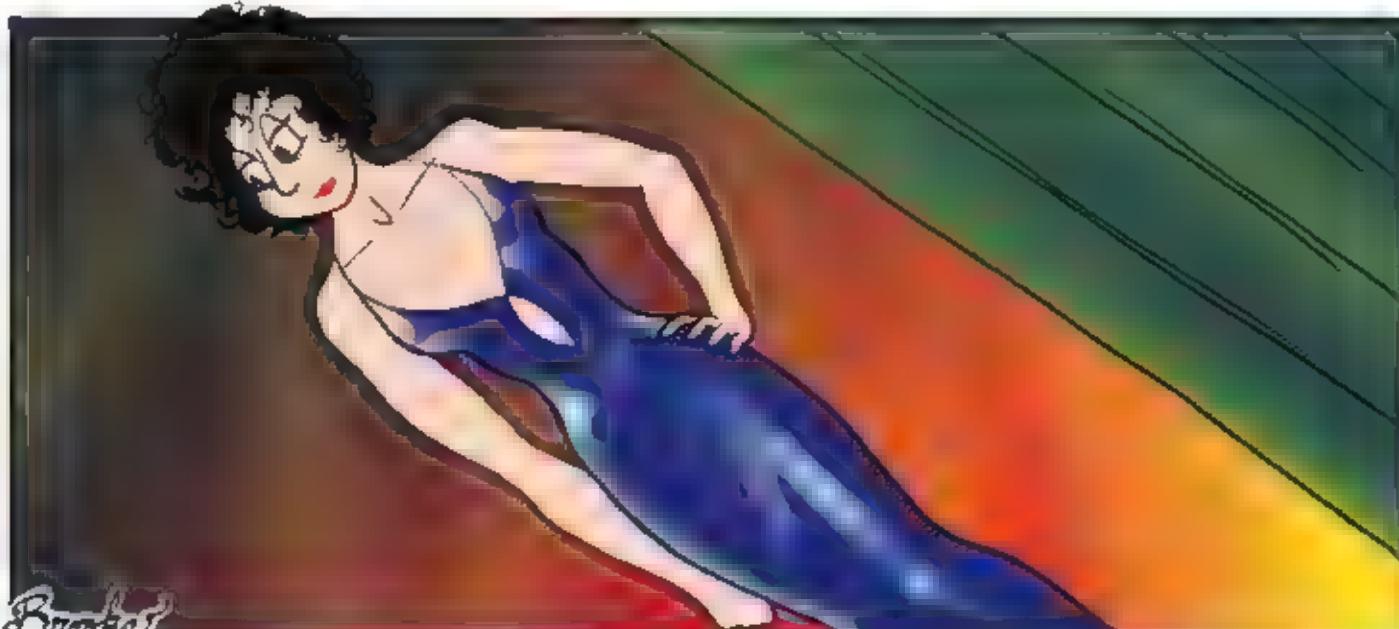
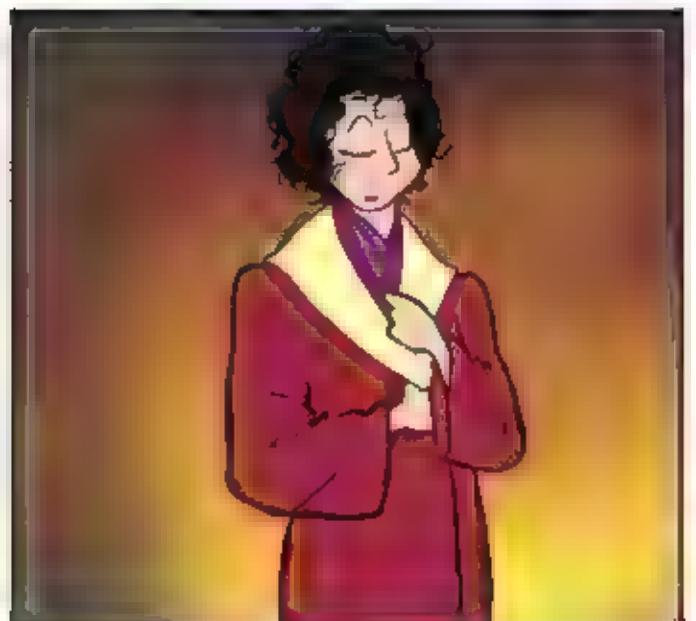
AND I SAID I GO THERE OFTEN, AND FATHER DURLY SAID HE DOES TOO AND HOW STRANGE IT WAS WE HADN'T RUN INTO EACH OTHER BEFORE, AND I SAID IT WAS WEIRD...

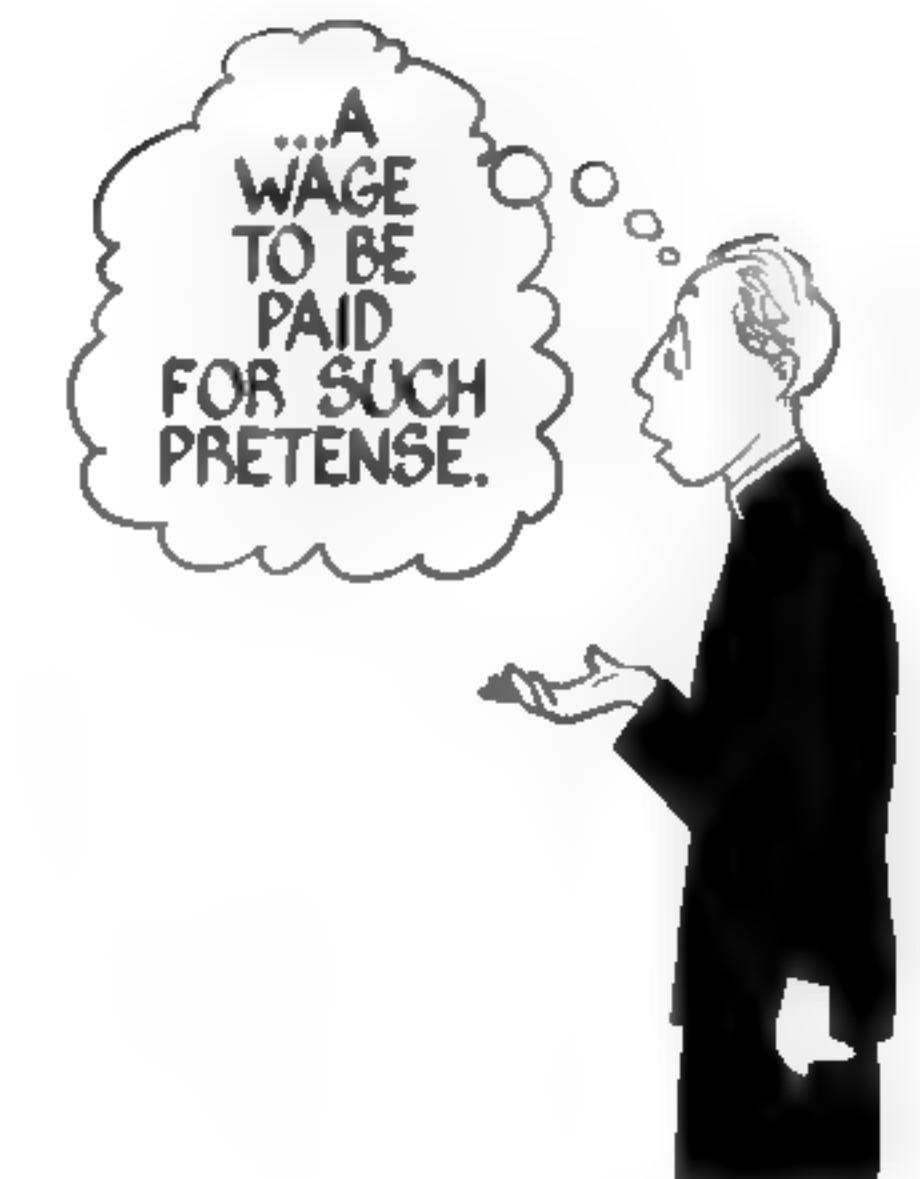
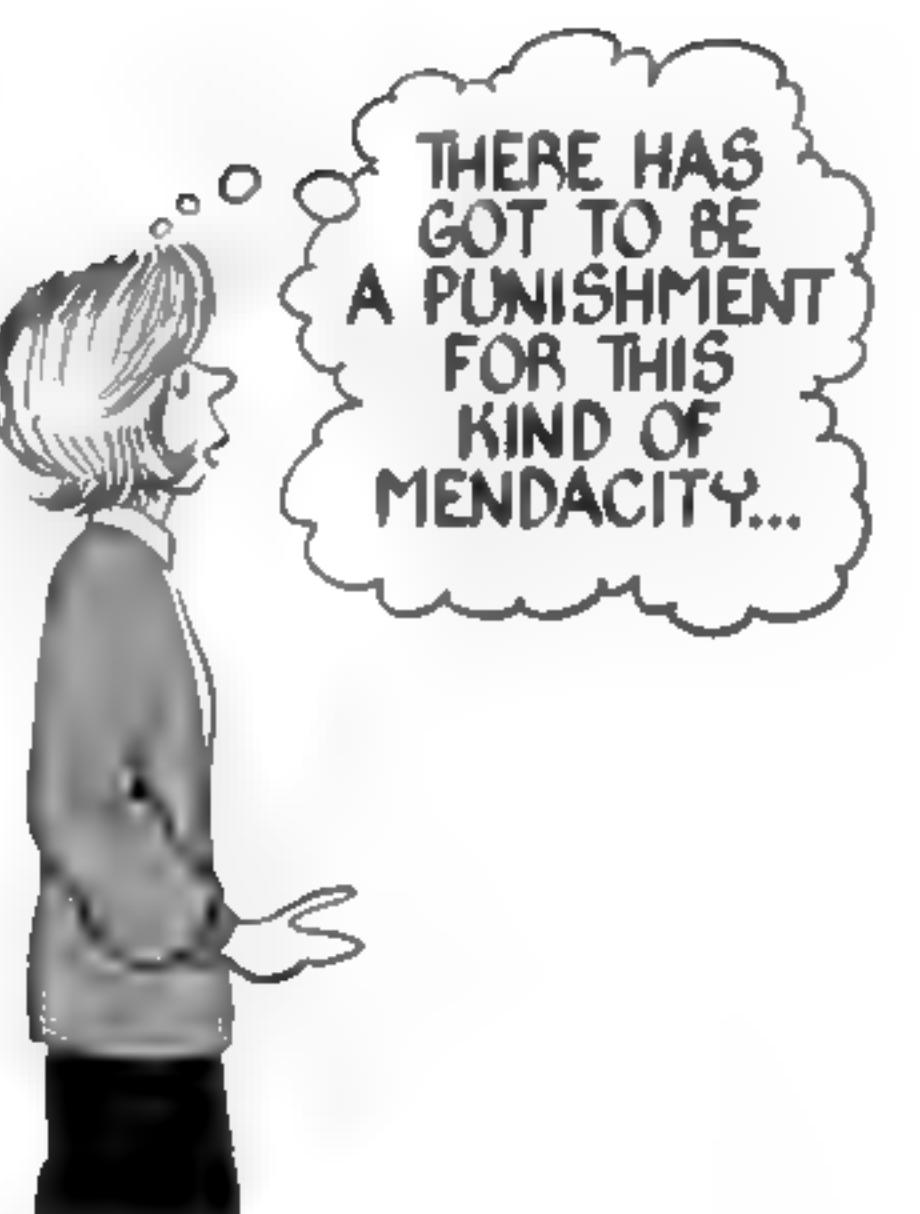
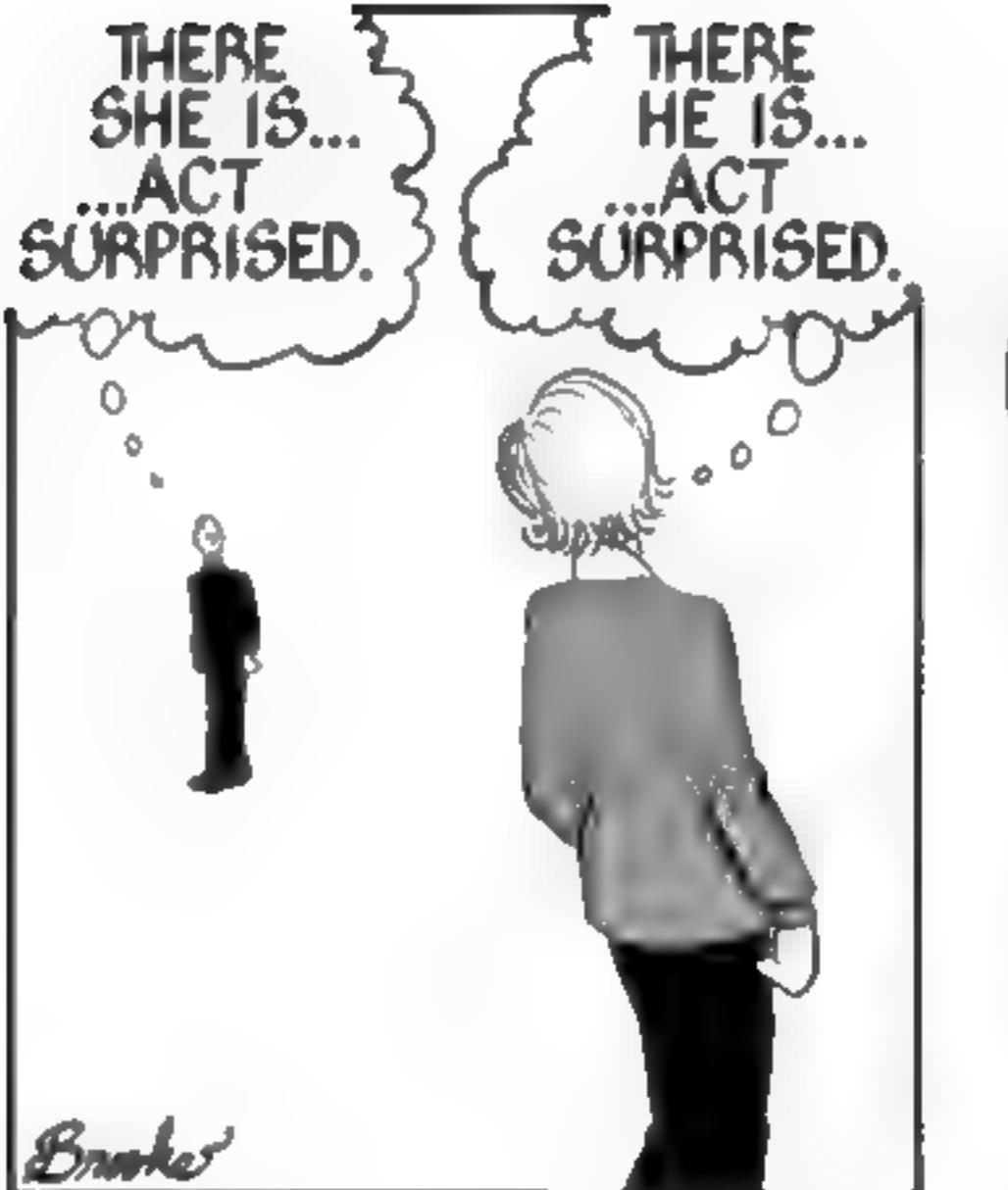


Brooke

SAY SETH, THIS IS FATHER DURLY...DO YOU KNOW, SO YOU'D BY ANY CHANCE, WHERE LIKE TO THE BETHESDA KNOW HOW TERRACE TO GET TO IS? THE BETHESDA TERRACE?







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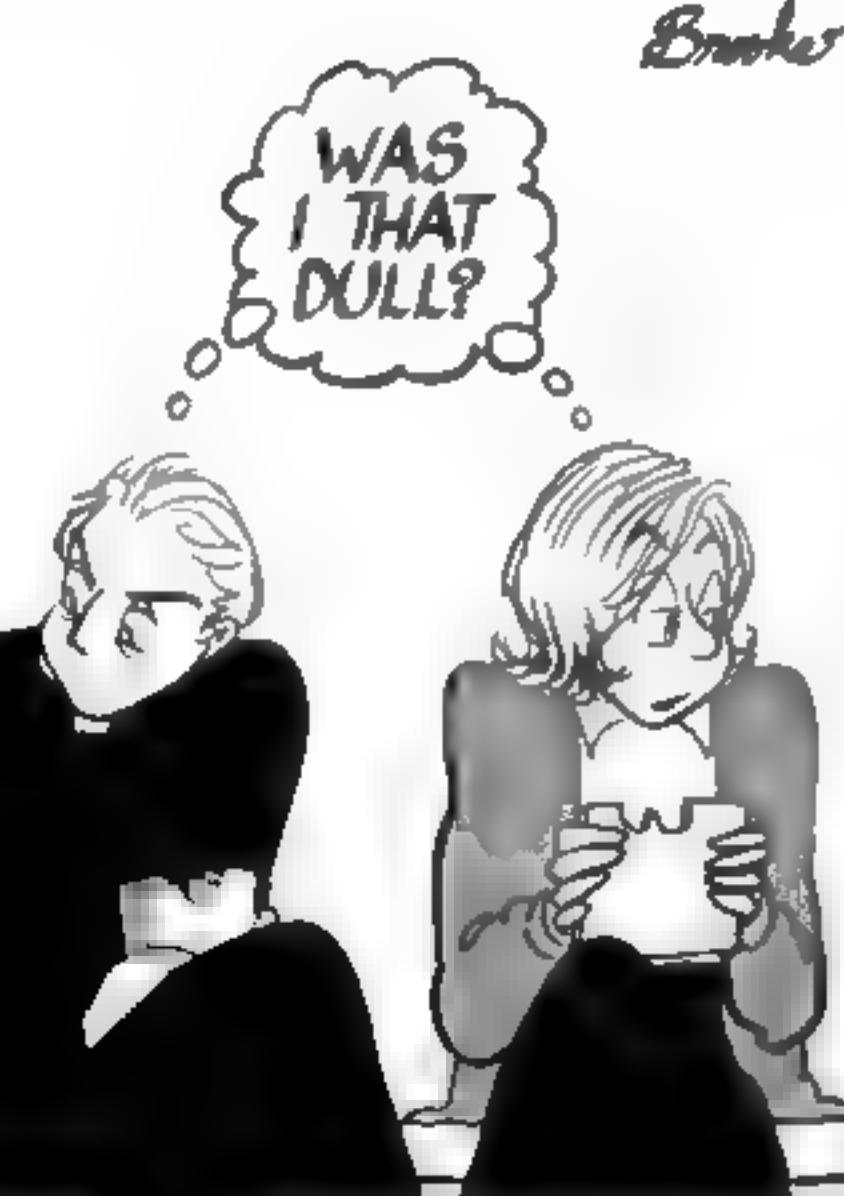


TELL ME, DID
YOUR AUNT
EVER MENTION
ME?

UH...NO
SHE NEVER
DID.

DID YOU
EVER MENTION
HER TO
ANYBODY?

NO...
I NEVER
HAD
OCCASION.



*Dear Thorax, I have fallen
in love with a man whom
I greatly respect. I cannot
tell him because I might
undermine his pledge
to another. I wish I could
forget him. Is there
anything you
might suggest?
Torn in
New York*



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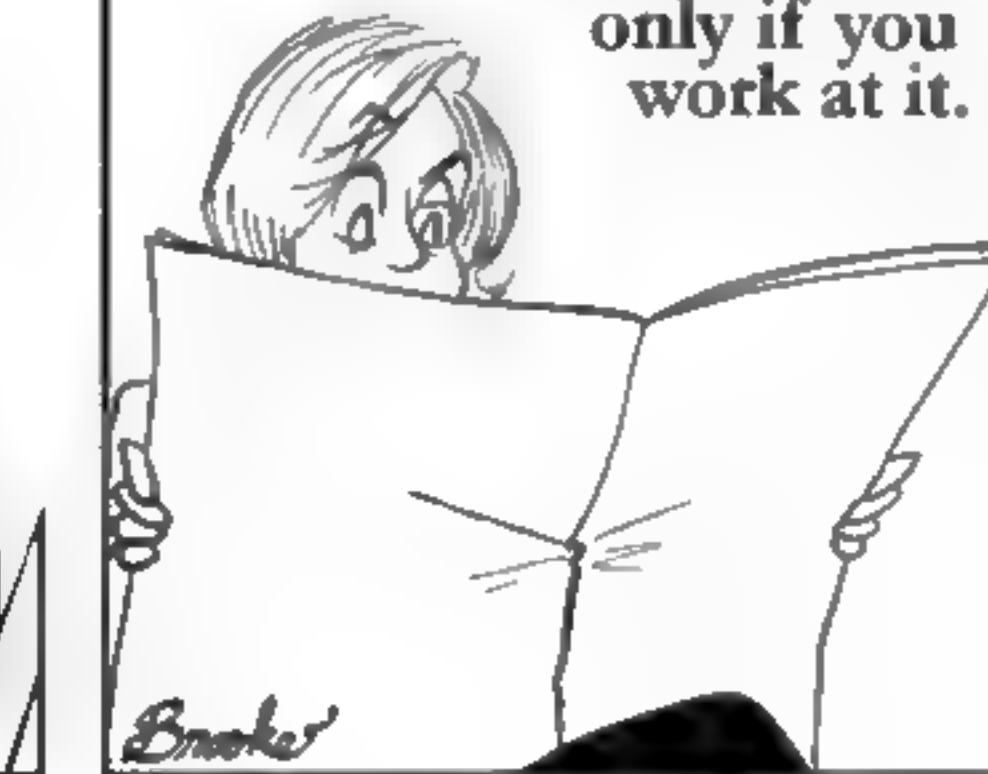
*Dear Torn,
This is always the problem
with falling in love –
the looming threat that it
will be accompanied by
honor, respect, self-
sacrifice...even the blight
of happy children.*



*With people like you
cluttering up the world,
we would have no operas,
no novels, no sermons,
no sitcoms. The Earth
would be a desiccated,
barren rock...*



*...devoid of foibles
to entertain us,
commandments
to disobey. Get with
the program. Love can
be sordid
only if you
work at it.*



Brooke

Dear Thorax,

I am married to my work, so to speak, but find myself falling deeply in love. I will not allow this to corrupt my mission in life, but I do not wish to hurt the object of my love. What should I do?

Spoken For in N.Y.C.



Dear Spoken For:

You clearly are a man of principle and conscience. In time you will do the right and honorable thing, and become utterly devoid of interest to all living beings.

Bug off!



Brooks

Dear Thorax,
Recently I married a woman whom
for many years I've been in love with.
Every day now is replete with a
passion and happiness I cannot
help but look forward to.
Every night is pure rapture
nothing else can compare
with. Have I any right, in
such a world as this, to live
with a woman I feel such
insatiable ardor for?

— Overawed in N.H.



Dear Overawed,
If you end another sentence
with a preposition, I'll kill
you with my bare hands.



Brooke

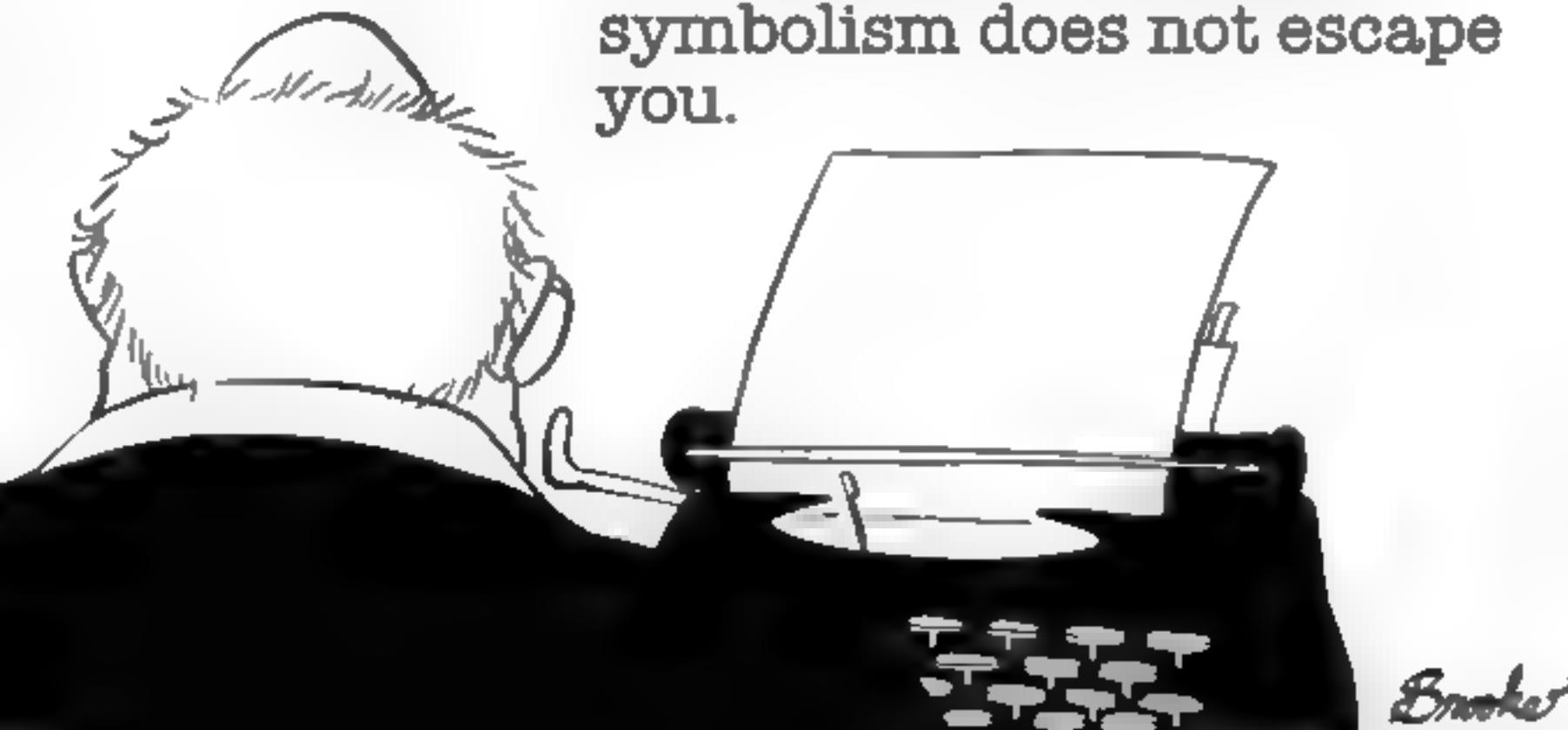
Dear Thorax.

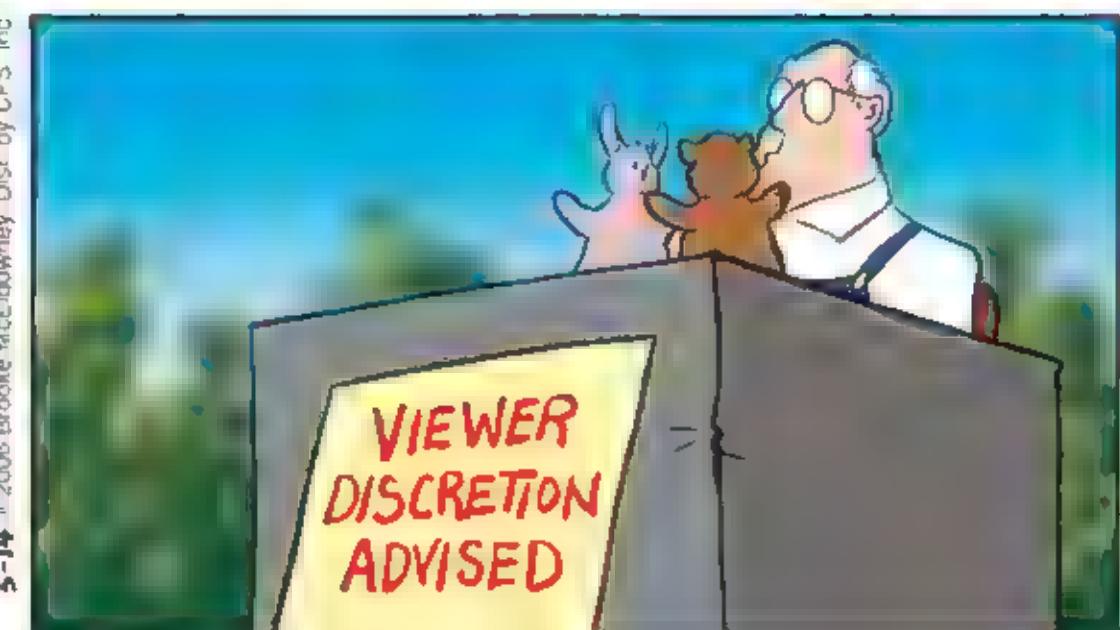
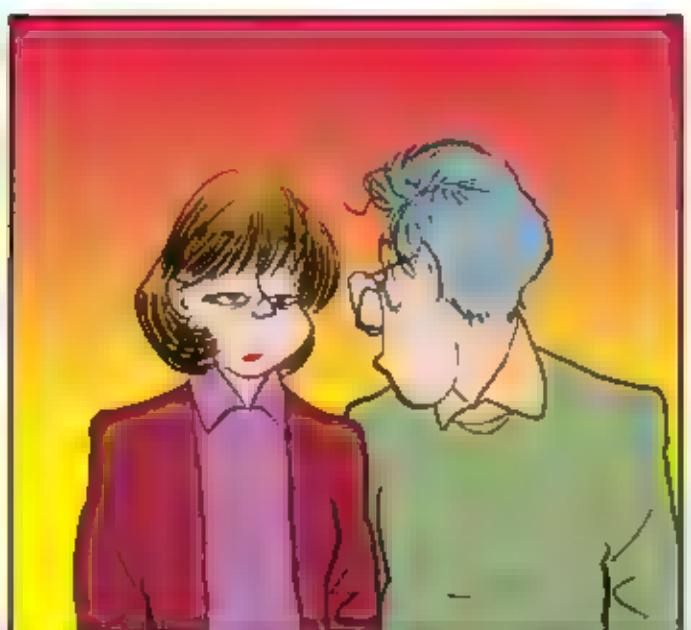
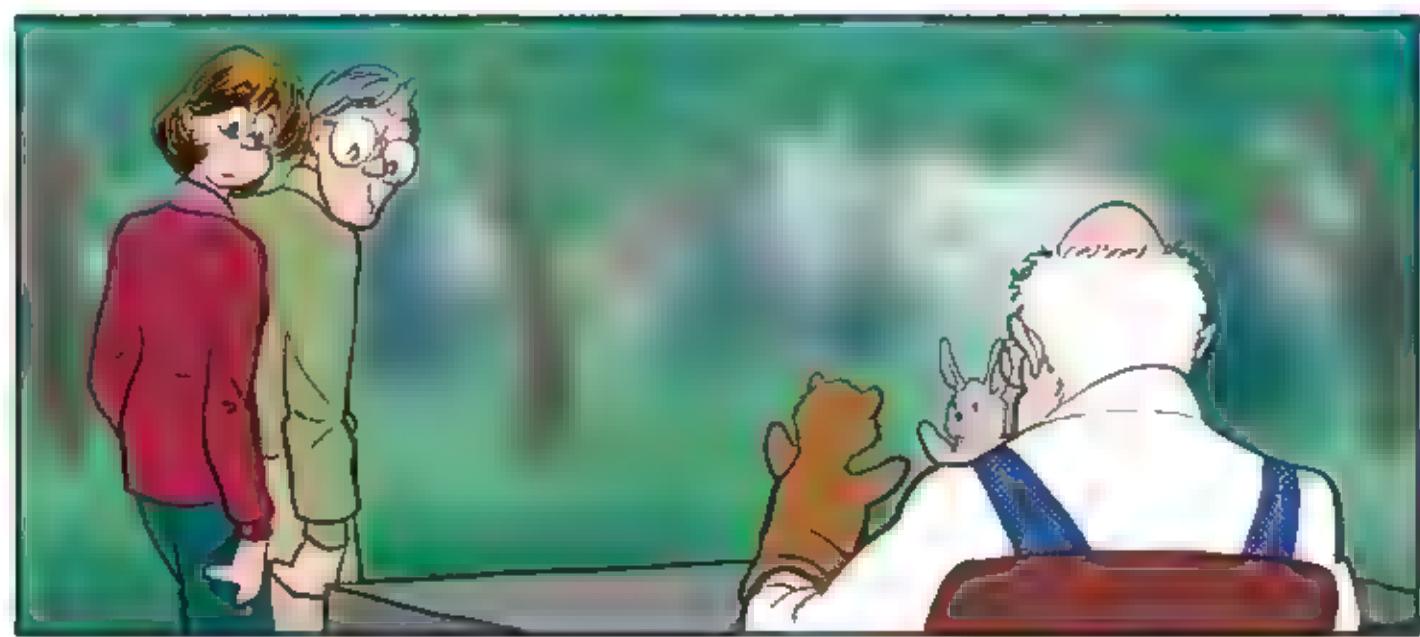
Recently I married my sweetheart of many years. The only regret I harbor lies in having waited so long to realize the love and happiness that...



Dear Name Illegible,

A bird just defecated on your note, obscuring the last sentence. I trust the symbolism does not escape you.





Dear Thorax,

Several years ago I met a man and fell in love with him, which I kept secret. We ran into each other recently, at which time I led him to believe I am the niece of the woman he met back then. I think he may now be displaying affection for me rather than my "aunt," which makes me jealous of myself, angry at him and ashamed of my own duplicity. What should I do?

Split Personality
in NYC



Dear Split,

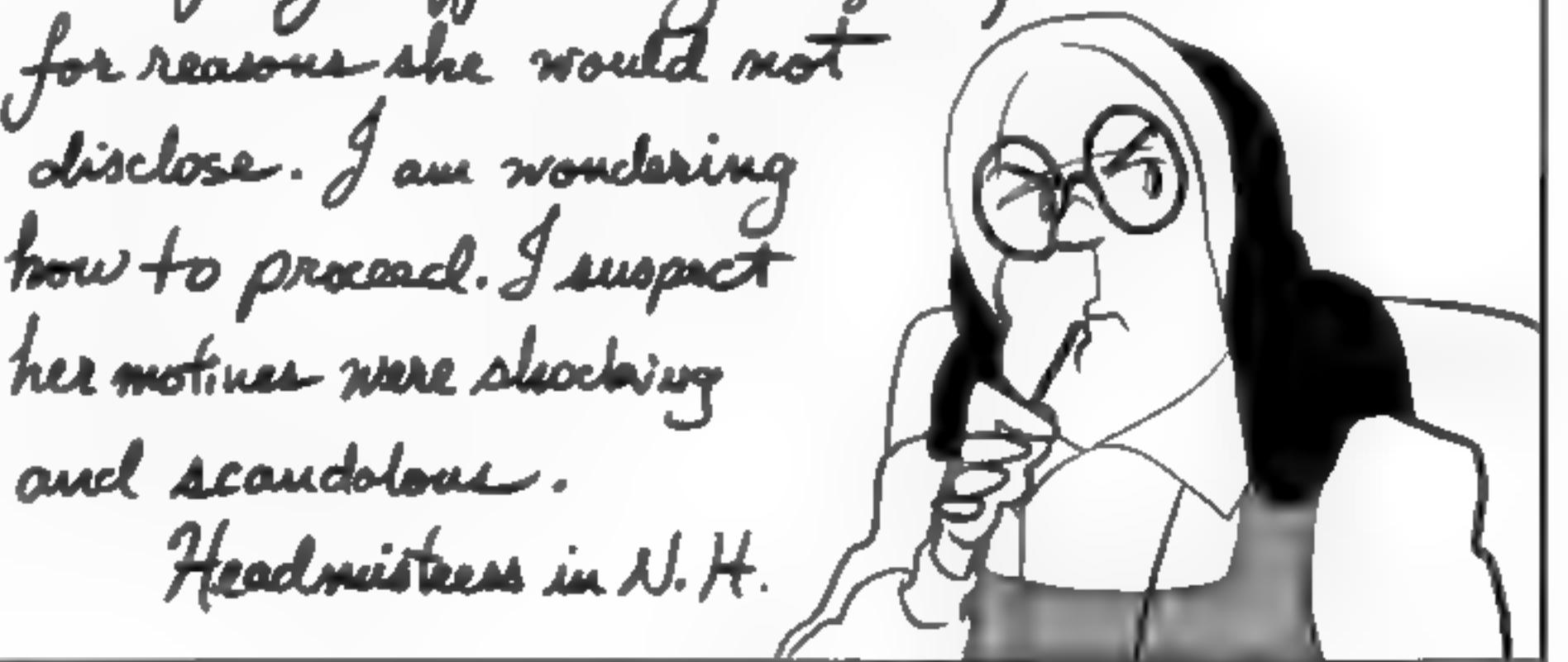
You comprise an appalling mixed assortment of neurotic compulsions, suppressed desires, denial and guilt. You are beyond any help the psychiatric profession could offer, and of enormous entertainment potential.

Keep writing.

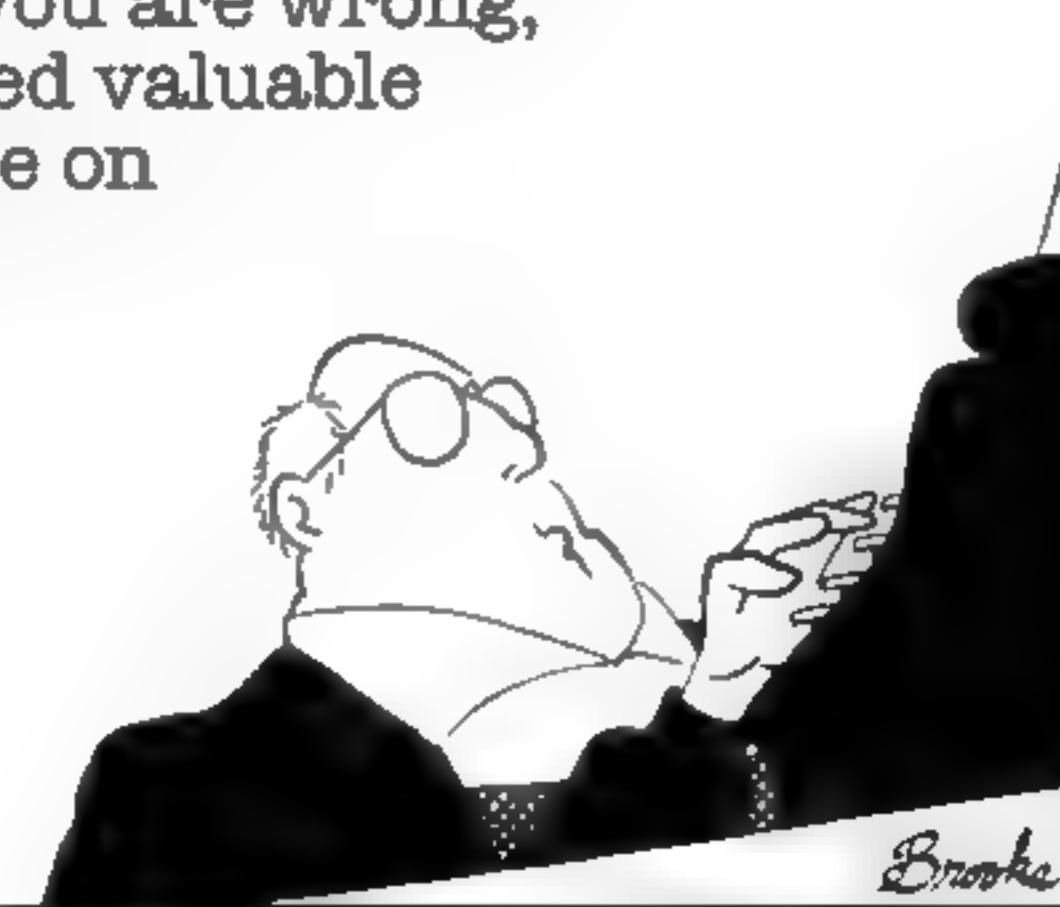


Brooks

Dear Thorax,
I am the headmistress of a Catholic School.
One of my staff recently resigned from the order
for reasons she would not
disclose. I am wondering
how to proceed. I suspect
her motives were shocking
and scandalous.
Headmistress in N.H.



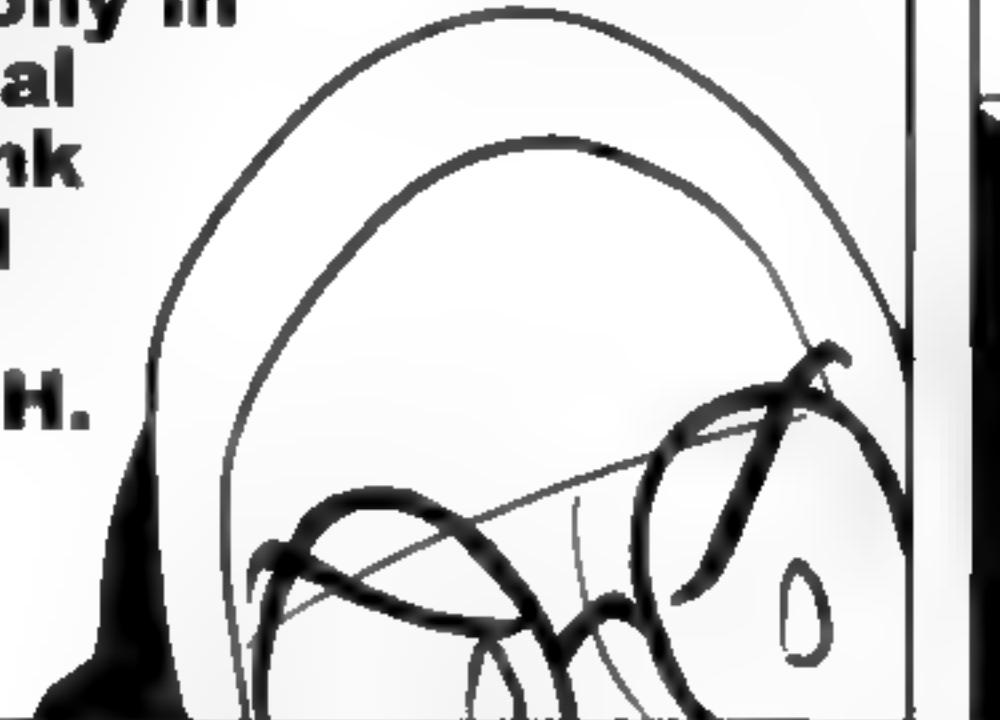
Dear Nosy,
I hope so. I am first and foremost
a journalist. If you are wrong,
I have just wasted valuable
newspaper space on
the sane and
reasonable.



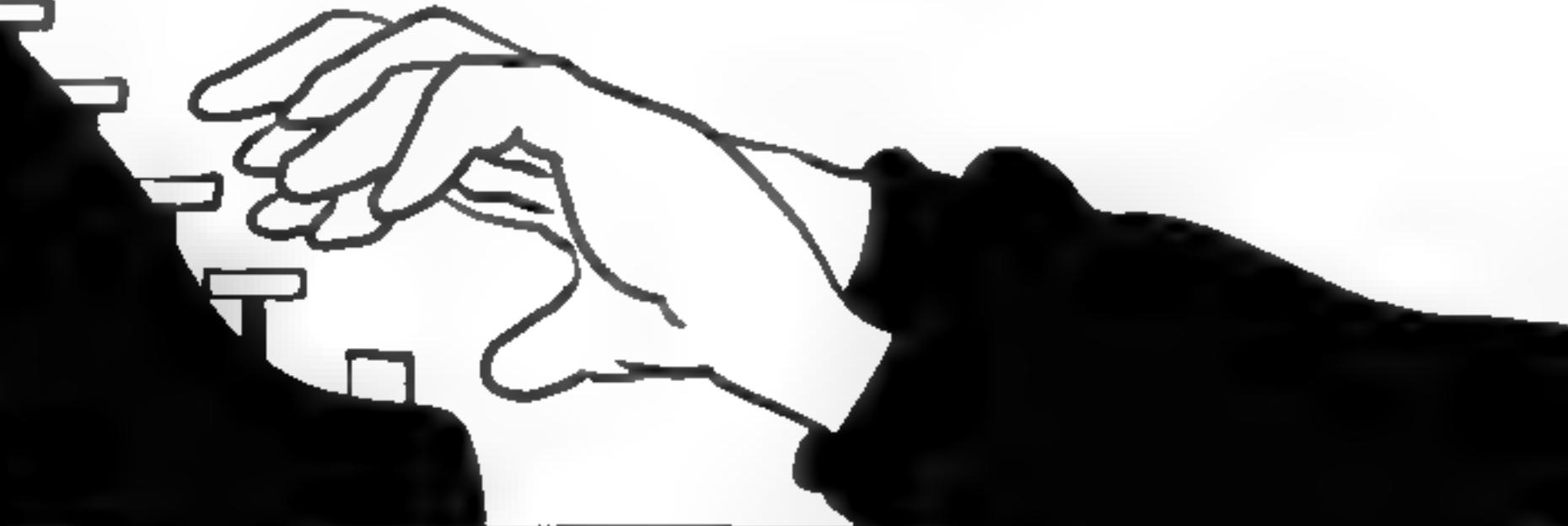
**Dear Thorax,
I am the Catholic school headmistress
who wrote to you of recent date on a
matter of deep concern. You responded
with what may be called manifest irony.
I do not approve of irony in
these halls. My normal
urge would be to spank
the back of your hand
with a ruler.**

Headmistress in N.H.

Brake

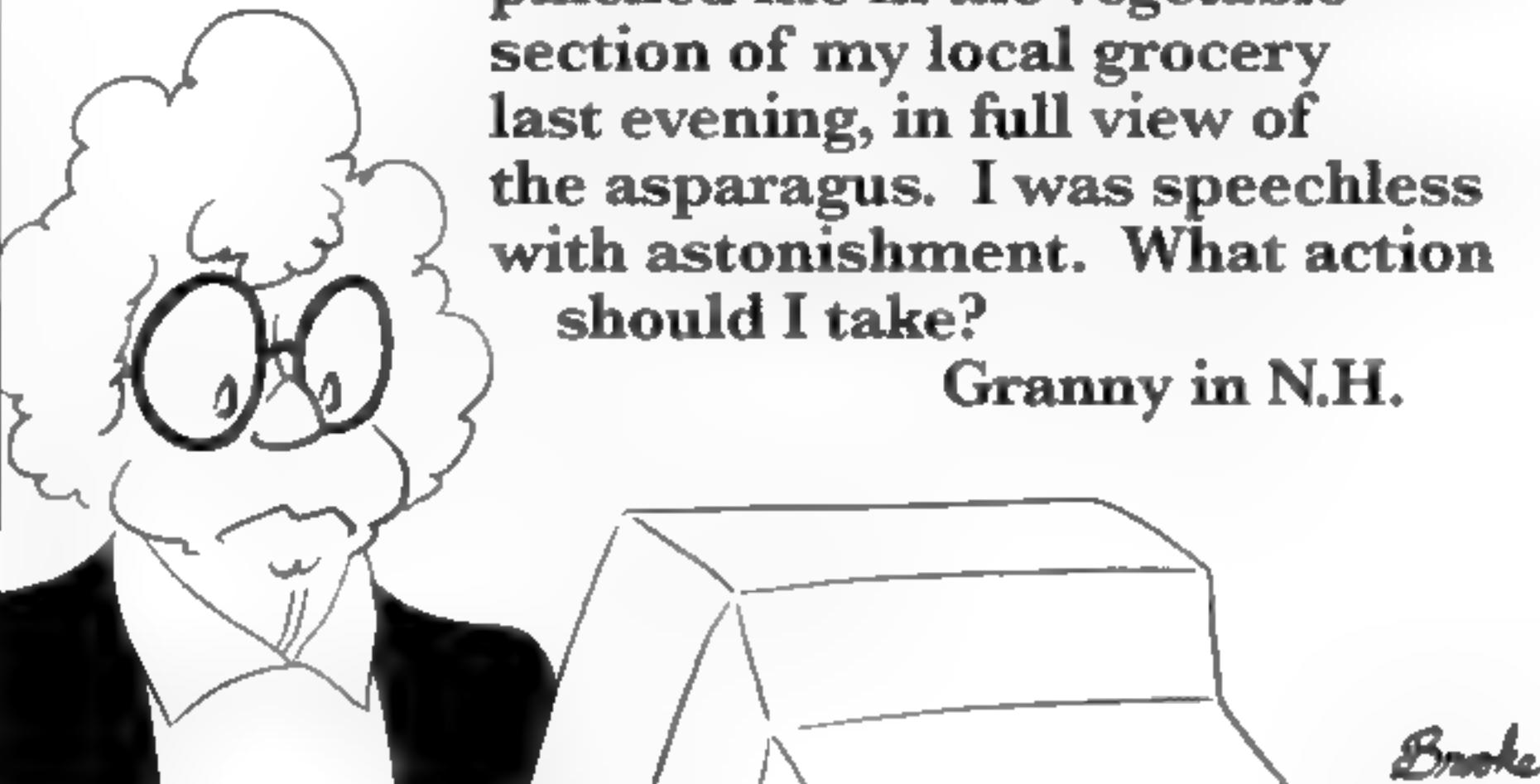


**Dear Attila,
Try and find me.
....Nyah.**



Dear Thorax,
A man dressed like Flash Gordon
pinched me in the vegetable
section of my local grocery
last evening, in full view of
the asparagus. I was speechless
with astonishment. What action
should I take?

Granny in N.H.



Dear Granite State Granny,
Loiter in front of the avocados
tonight. I will be attired
as Zorro.



Brooke

Dear Thorax,

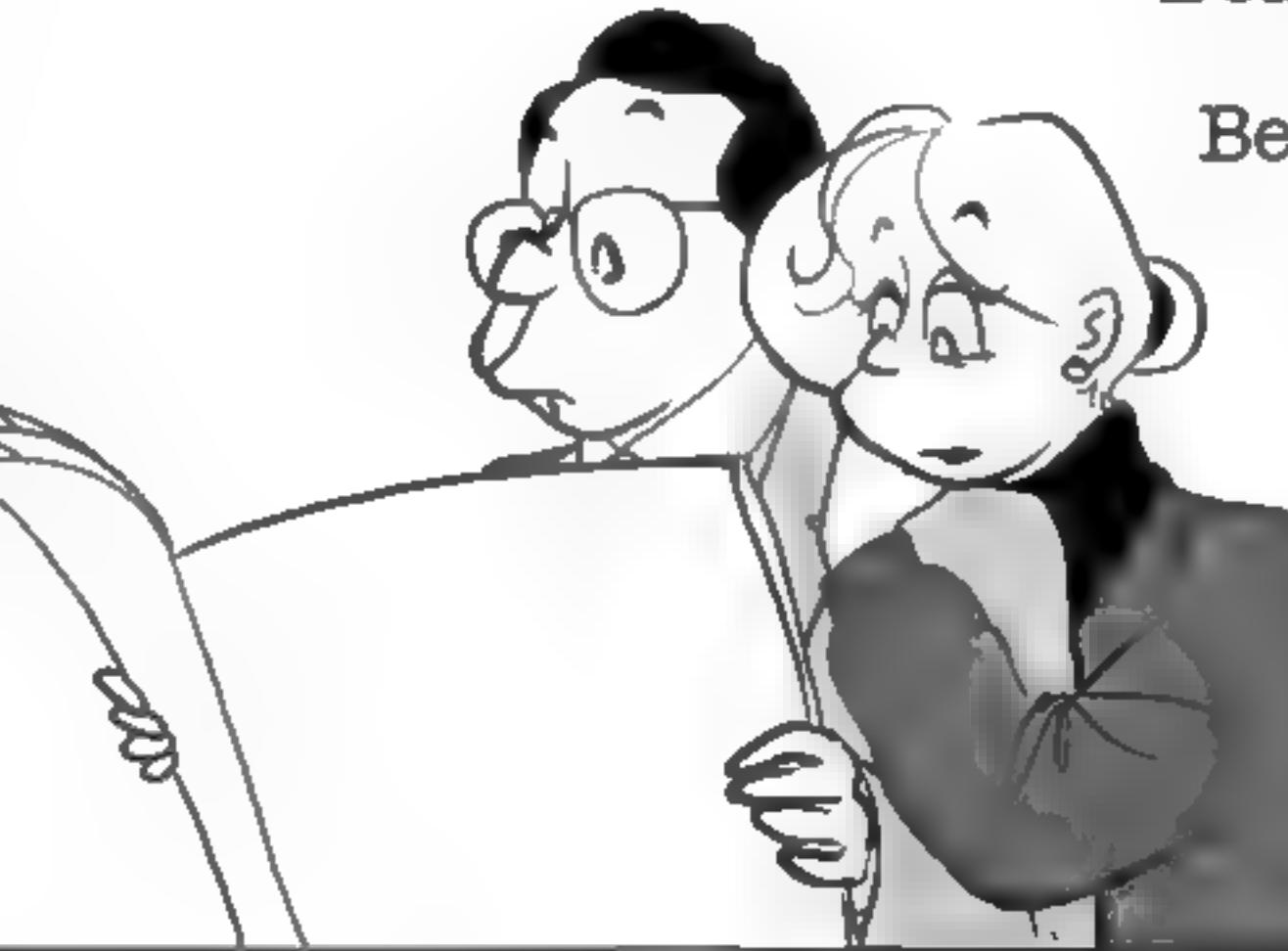
Why?

A Cellist
in Gotham



Dear Cellist,

Because.



Dear Thorax,

I love a collist who does not respond to my advances.
He is besotted with a skinny little vole of a dancer
instead. I am excruciatingly sexy, my perfumed
body is to die for, my voice dark, my accent
alluringly foreign, my couture heart-
stopping. What am I doing wrong?



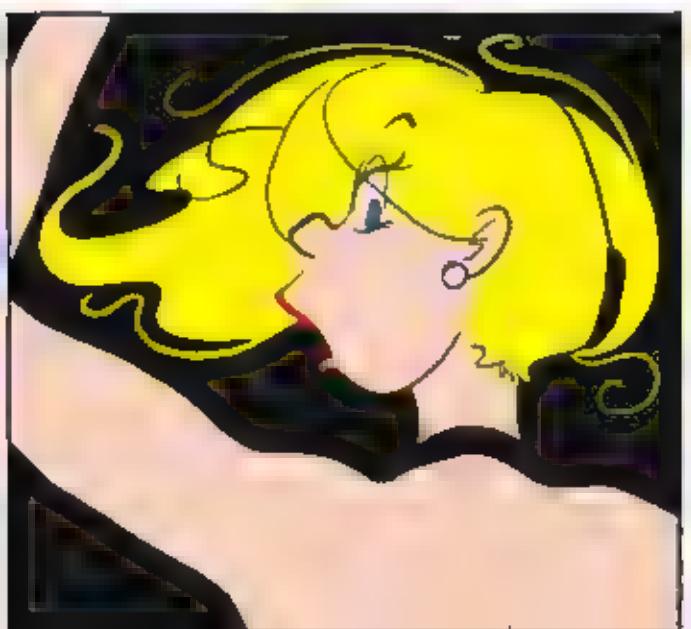
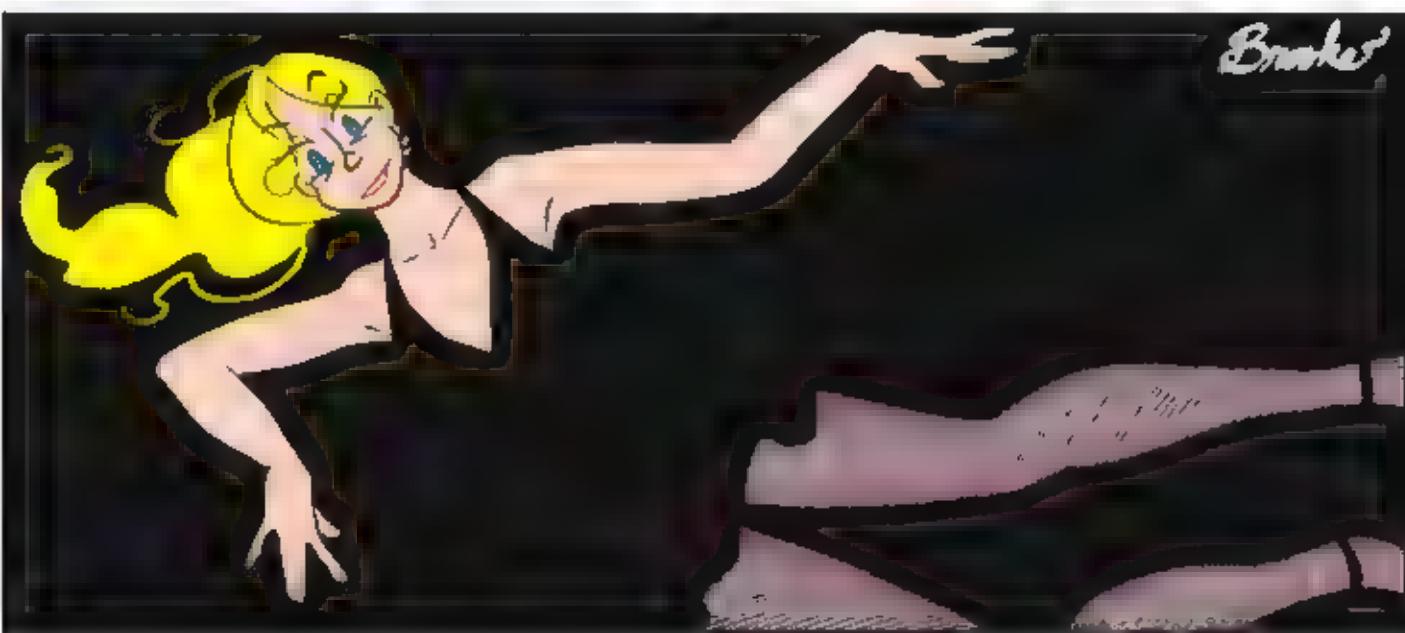
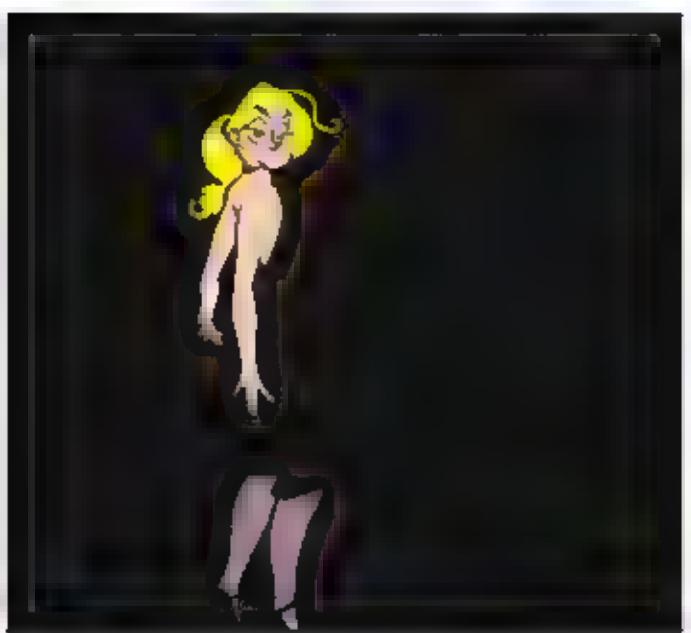
Well-Turned Ankle
in New York City

Broker

Dear Well-Turned,
My tongue is getting
tangled in the carriage
of my Royal. I can't
move to

...Gh b>m
...G H >Pm!!





IF YOUR AUNT DIDN'T
MENTION ME, DID SHE
REFER TO A PRIEST SHE
MET AT HER SCHOOL LAST
YEAR? A BISHOP'S
SECRETARY?

YES,
BUT SHE
GAVE NO
SPECIFICS.



FROM WHAT SHE WROTE,
I BELIEVE SHE LIKED HIM...
...BUT THAT WOULD BE
READING BETWEEN THE
LINES. I GATHER SHE
THOUGHT HE WAS KIND AND
SWEET AND CHARMING...
...BUT AGAIN, THAT'S
READING BETWEEN THE
LINES.

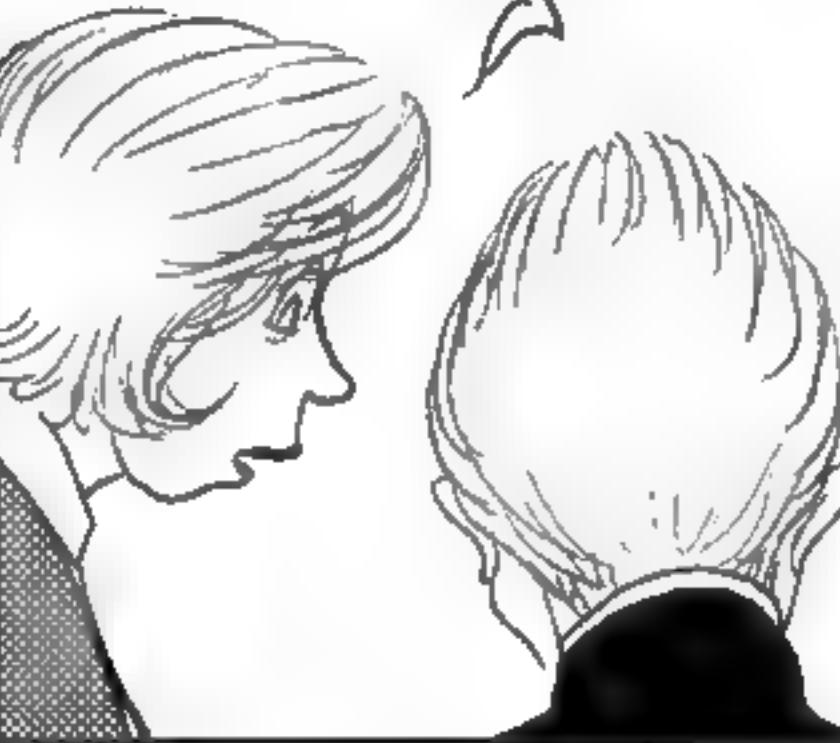


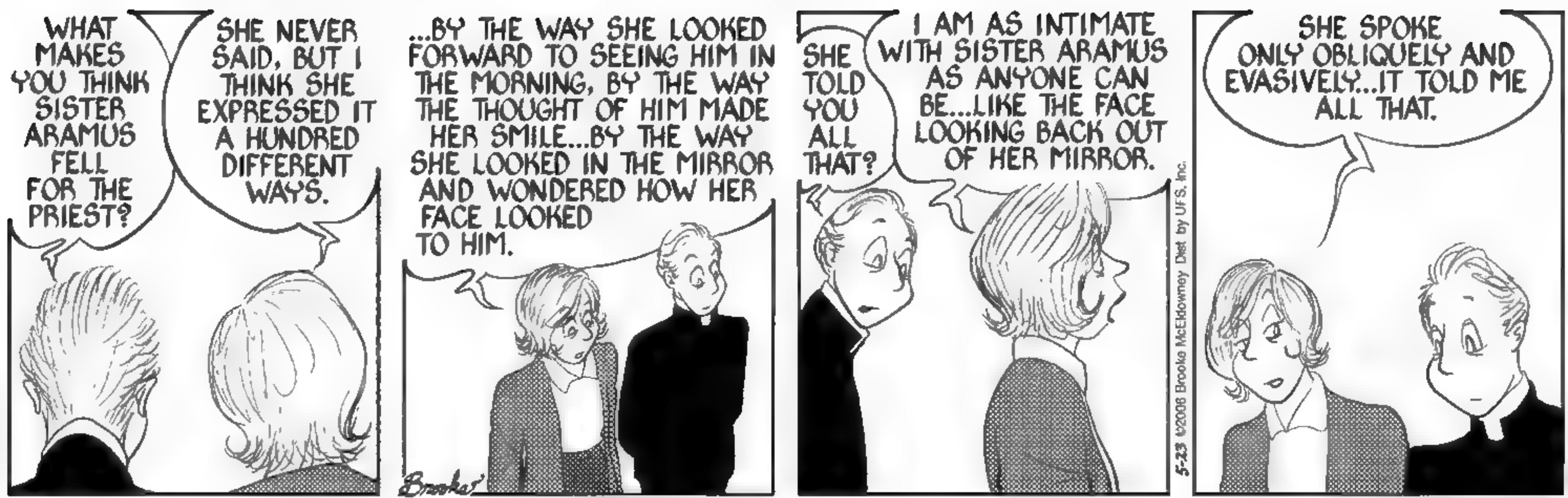
I THINK SHE MAY
EVEN HAVE...WELL...
...FALLEN FOR HIM
A LITTLE.

BUT
THAT'S
READING
BETWEEN
THE
LINES?



SISTER ABAMUS KEPT
MOST OF HER FEELINGS
BETWEEN THE LINES.
...AND IT WAS GETTING
PRETTY CROWDED
THERE.





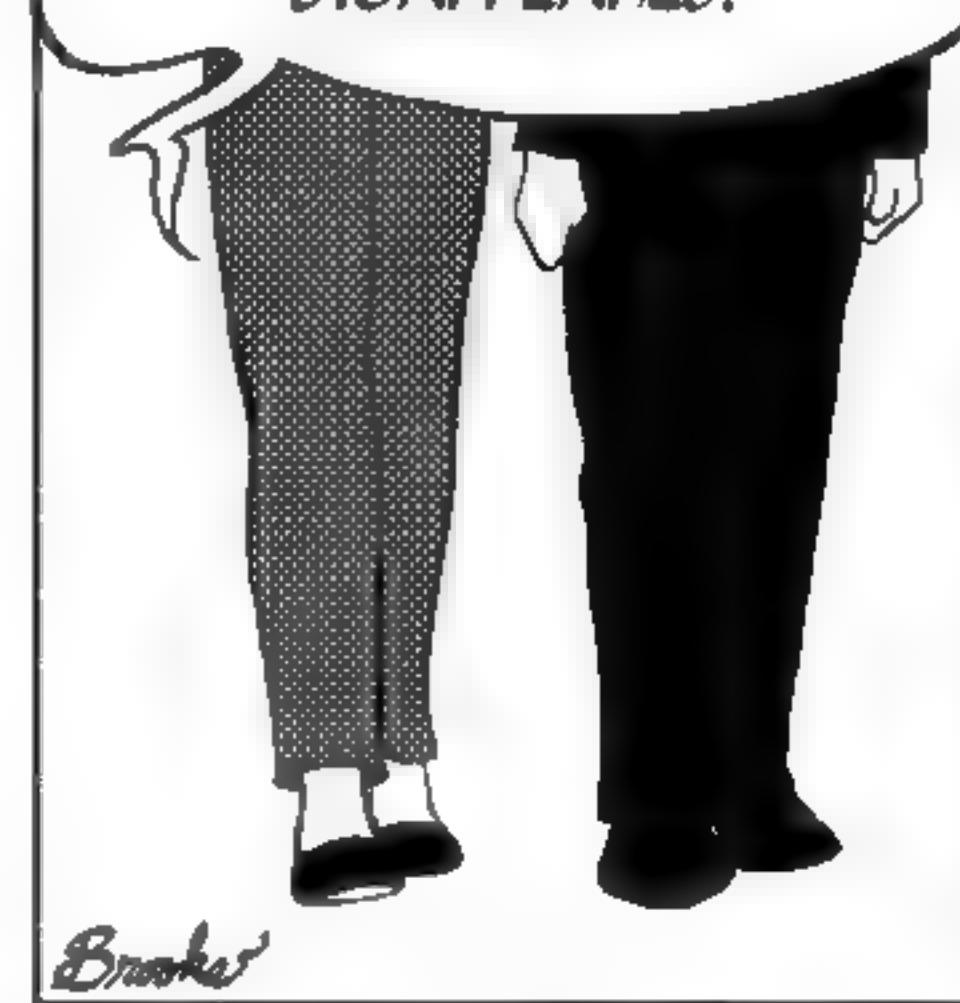
AFTER THE PRIEST LEFT,
SHE NEVER MENTIONED
HIM AGAIN.



"SHE NEVER TOLD HER LOVE,
BUT LET CONCEALMENT,
LIKE A WORM IN THE BUD,
FEED ON HER DAMASK
CHEEK: SHE PIN'D IN
THOUGHT; AND WITH A
GREEN AND YELLOW
MELANCHOLY, SHE SAT
LIKE PATIENCE ON A
MONUMENT,
SMILING AT
GRIEF."



EVENTUALLY, SHE
QUIETLY RESIGNED AND
DISAPPEARED.



Brooks

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I GATHER
SHE TAUGHT
SHAKESPEARE.



NOT AS
MUCH AS
SHAKESPEARE
TAUGHT HER.

Dear Thorax,
I resigned my order because
of an intense, spiritual but
very secular love, and I've
lived in private contemplation
ever since. I feel that, in time,
I can beat this thing and be
happy. Am I following the
right road?

In retreat in NYC



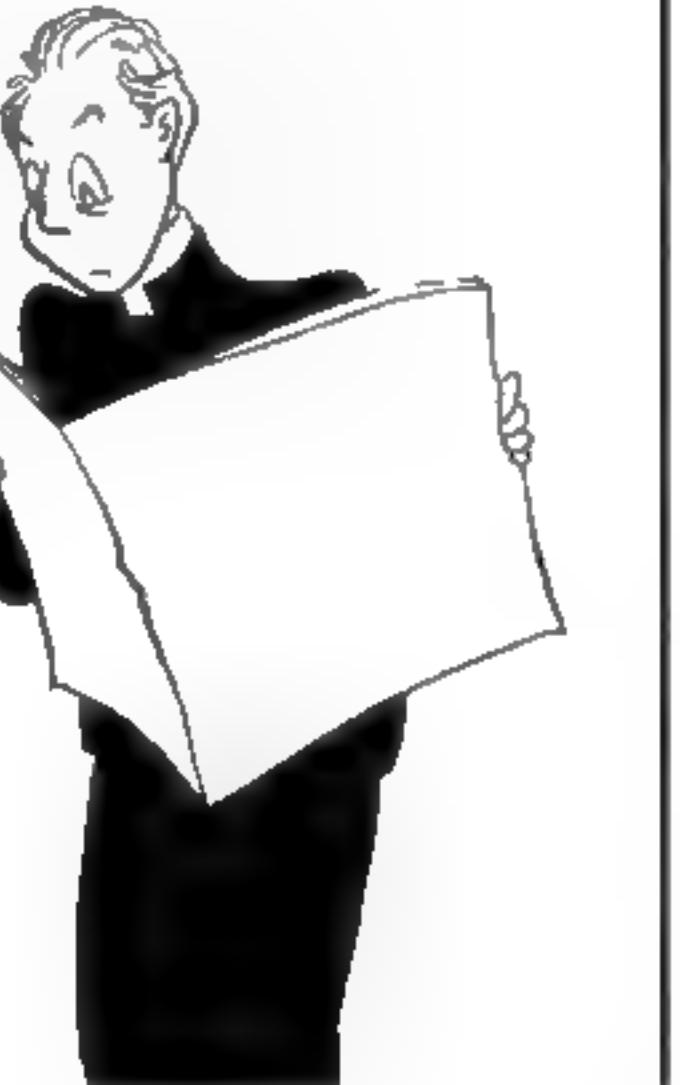
Dear Retreat,
Emerge!
Take life by the throat!
Cloistered people are
expected to exist in
self-imposed,
contemplative denial.
But that's no way
to treat a laity.



Brooks

Dear Thorax,
I read with some dismay
your recent advice to a
former nun to quit her
self-imposed contemplation
and "take life by the throat!"
As a priest, I have to say
I found your admonition
glib and ill-considered.
This woman needs the
reflection that only time
and solitude will provide.

Yours sincerely,
Cleric in NYC

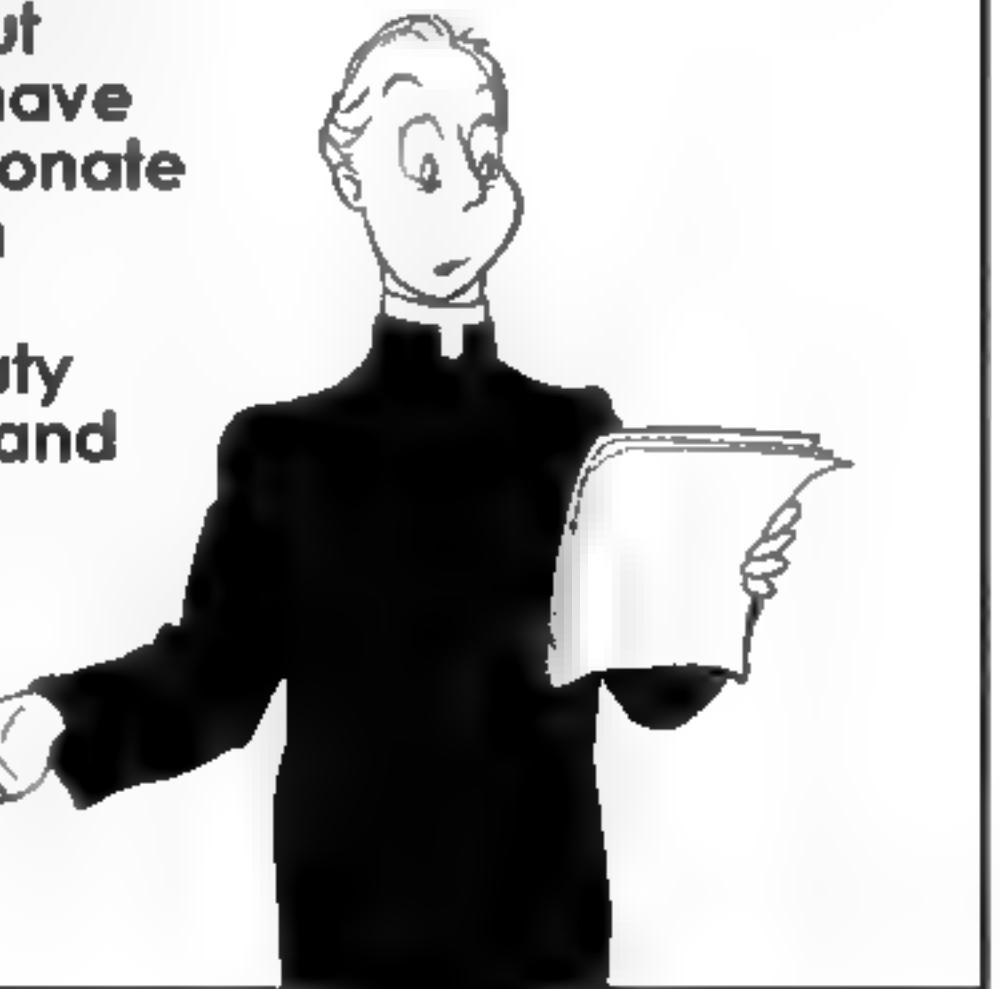


Dear Cleric,
I thought I told you
to bug off!



Brooker

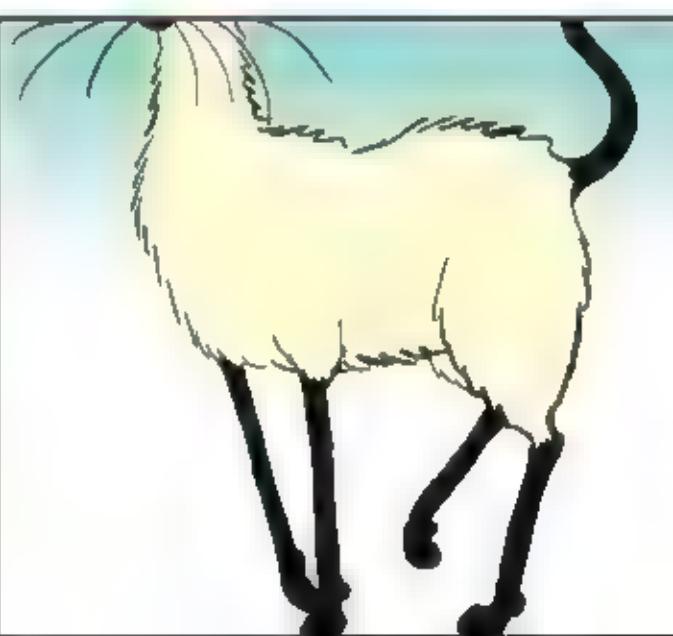
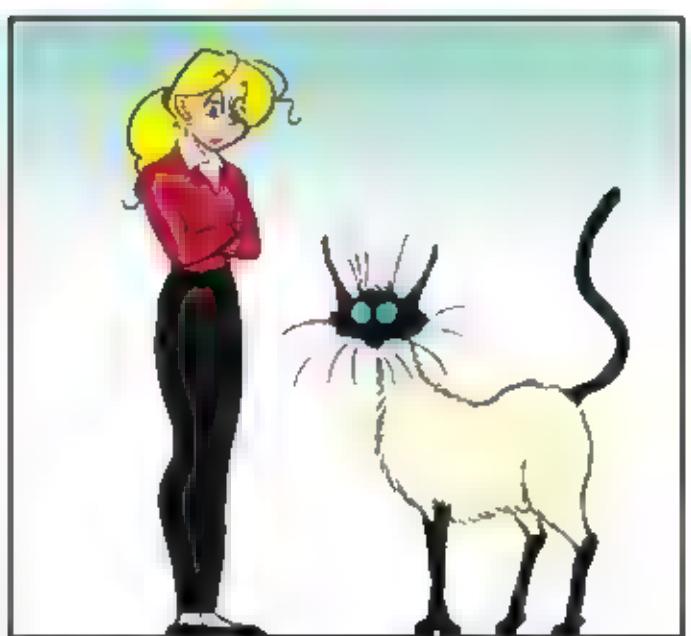
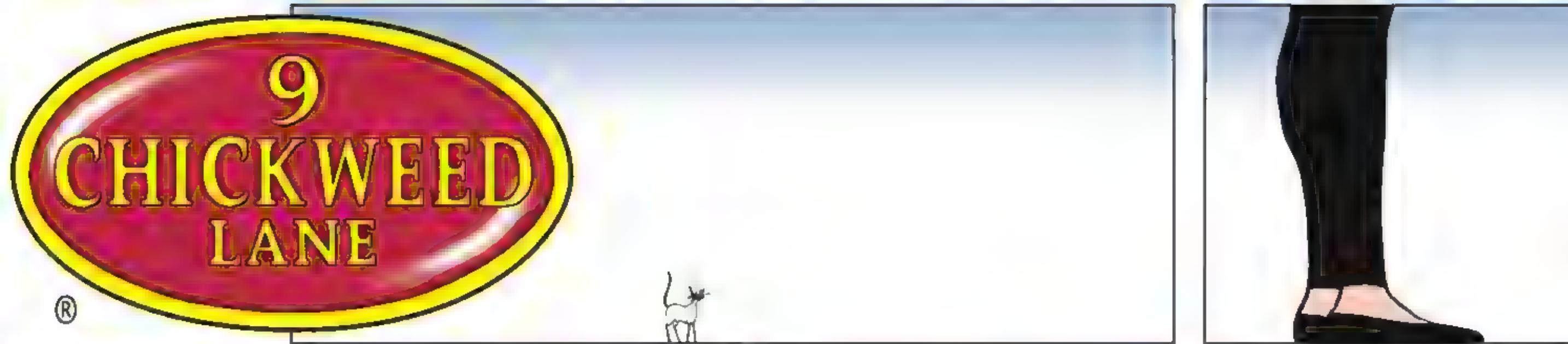
Dear Thorax,
I am a man who has taken
a vow of celibacy. I consider this
not only a moral precept but
an issue of honor. Of late I have
been developing an affectionate
and caring relationship with
a woman whose friendship
buoys me, and whose beauty
I cannot ignore. My ethics and
principles, as well as my
respect for her, prevent me
from acting on any
impulse other than the
most honorable. For
was it not St. Thomas
Aquinas who said...



Brooke

I'm sorry...
.....what?



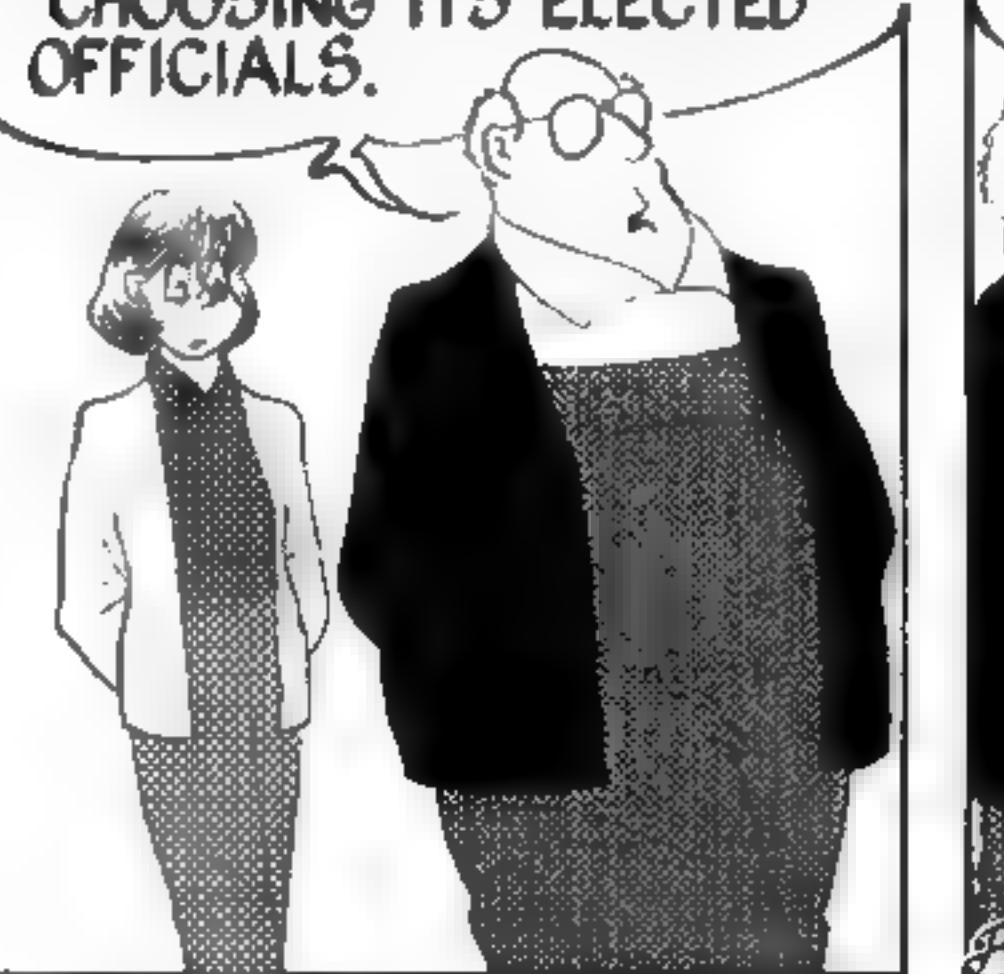


AS
A MATTER OF
PREARRANGEMENT,
CATS POSSESS
NAMES,
BUT DO NOT
ANSWER
TO THEM.



Brooke

AS MUCH AS I ADMIRE IT,
YOUR REPUBLIC HAS A
GREAT DEAL TO LEARN IN
CHOOSING ITS ELECTED
OFFICIALS.



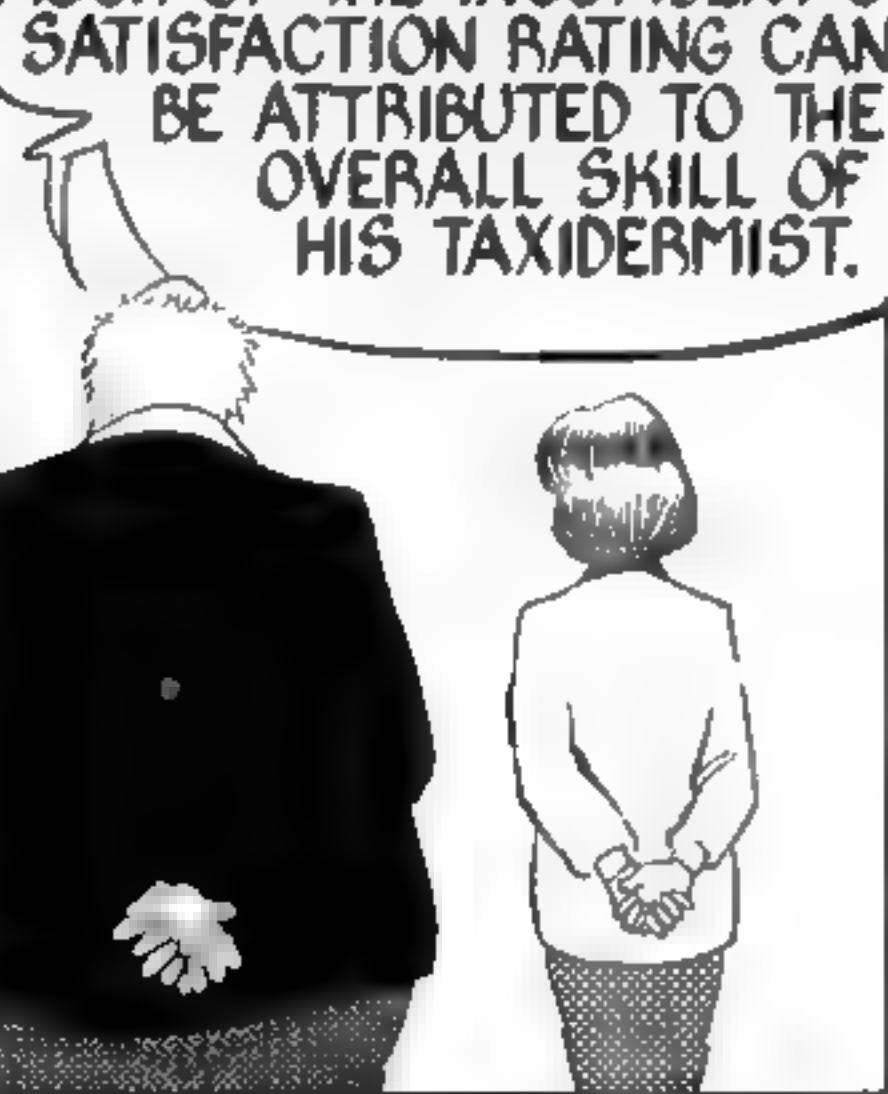
THE SUPREME PRESIDENT OF
MY WORLD, FOR INSTANCE,
HAS OCCUPIED HIS POST AS
LONG AS ANYONE CAN
RECALL, SO PLEASED
IS THE ELECTORATE
WITH
HIM.

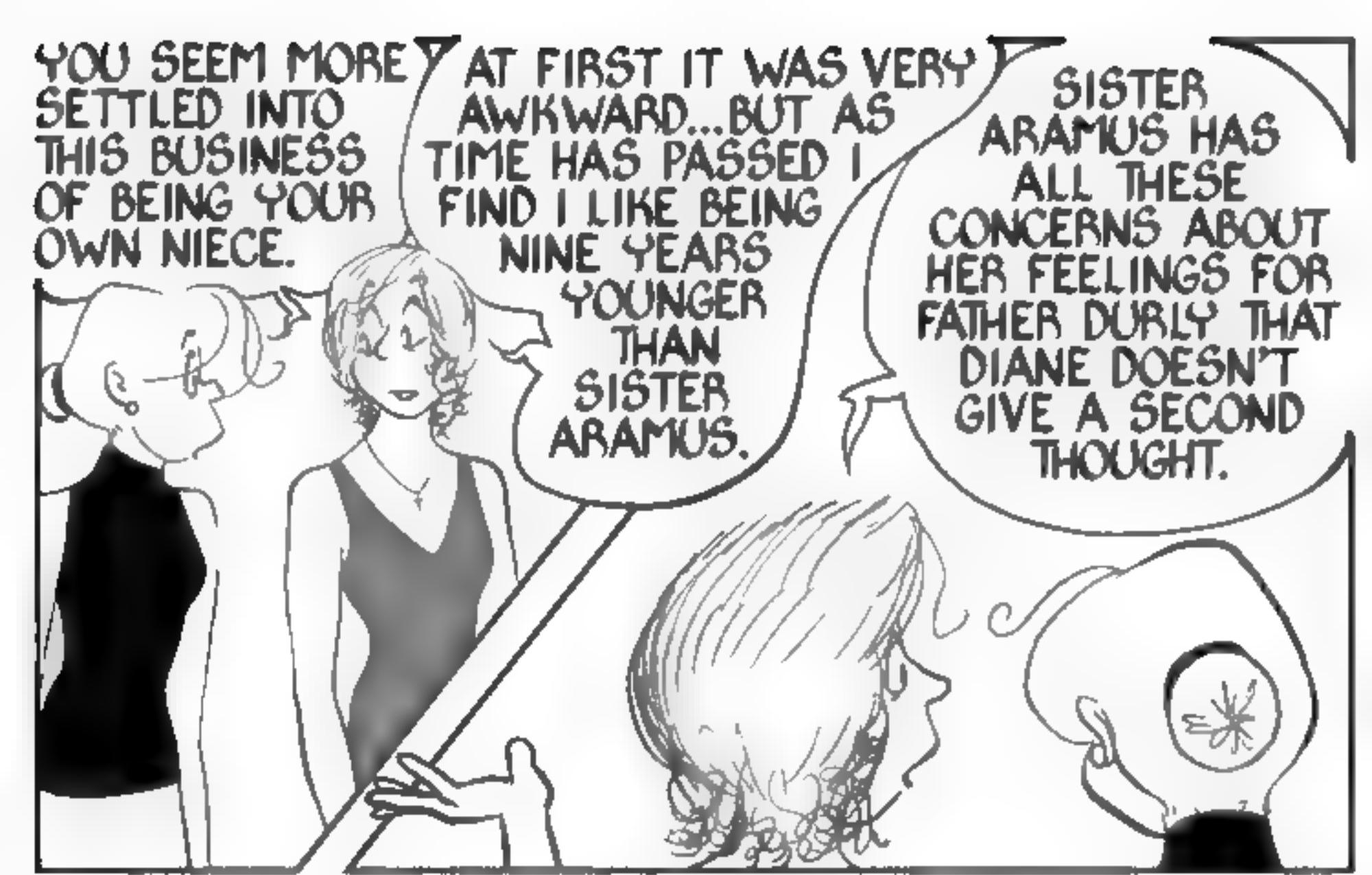


THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT
HIM THAT JUST ENGENDERS
TRUST. PERHAPS IT IS THE
CLARITY OF HIS GAZE,
HIS BEARING, HIS DIGNITY,
THE WAY HE DELIBERATES
WHEN WEIGHING ISSUES...



HOWEVER, I TEND TO THINK
MUCH OF THE INCUMBENT'S
SATISFACTION RATING CAN
BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE
OVERALL SKILL OF
HIS TAXIDERMIST.





SO, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S GOING TO GET HARDER TO TELL FATHER DURLY THE LONGER YOU WAIT?

TELL HIM? TELL HIM WHAT?



YOU KNOW...THAT YOU'RE SISTER ARAMUS.

I'M NOT SISTER ARAMUS...SHE SPLIT, MADE TRACKS, TOOK A POWDER.

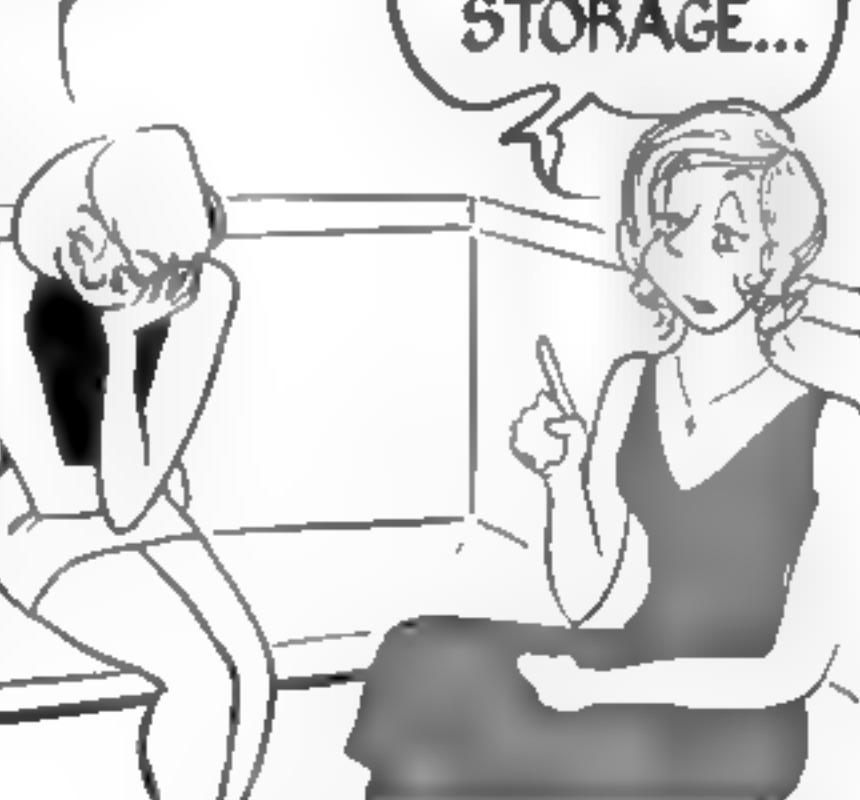


SHE'S OFF SOMEWHERE CONTEMPLATING HER NAVEL, GATHERING DUST, HANGING IN THE CLOSET, OUT TO PASTURE...



WELCOME TO ANOTHER EXCITING EPISODE OF "MINING FOR METAPHORS."

...ON THE SHELF, IN COLD STORAGE...

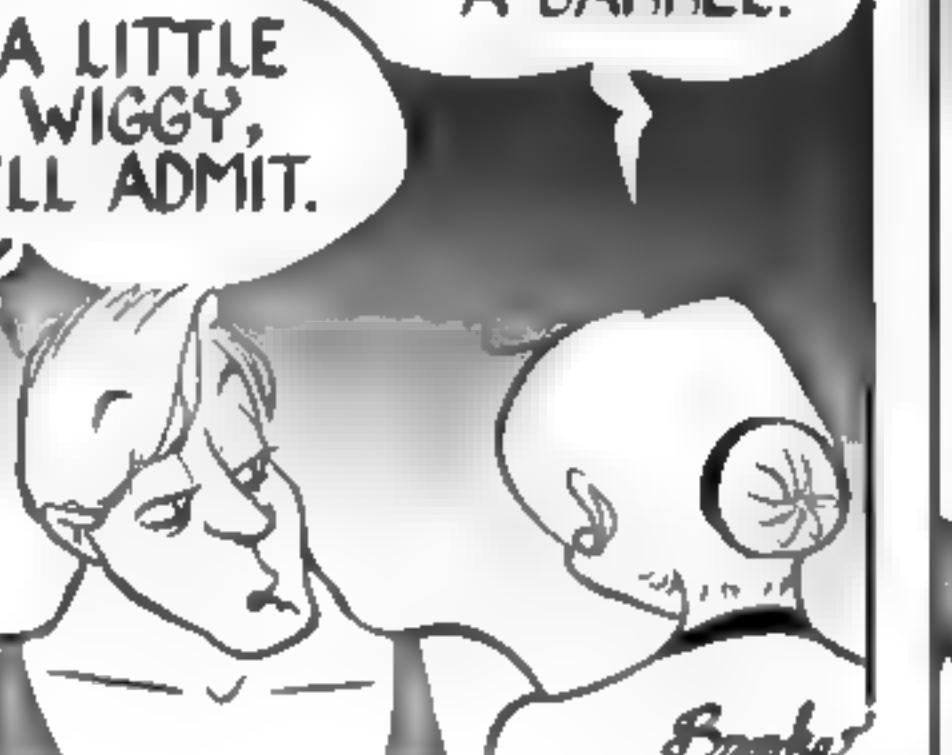


YOU
CREATED
A
MONSTER.

I ONLY
PROTECTED
DIANE
FROM AN
AWKWARD
CONFRONTATION.



WELL, NOW SHE'S SET HER
SIGHTS ON WRESTLING FATHER
DURLY'S AFFECTIONS FROM
SISTER ARAMUS. SHE SAID,
"DROP A HAT, DEAR, THE
MAN'S A FISH IN
A BARREL."



YOU DON'T
UNDERSTAND...MY OLD
ENGLISH TEACHER
MIXED METAPHORS...
...THEN LAUGHED.

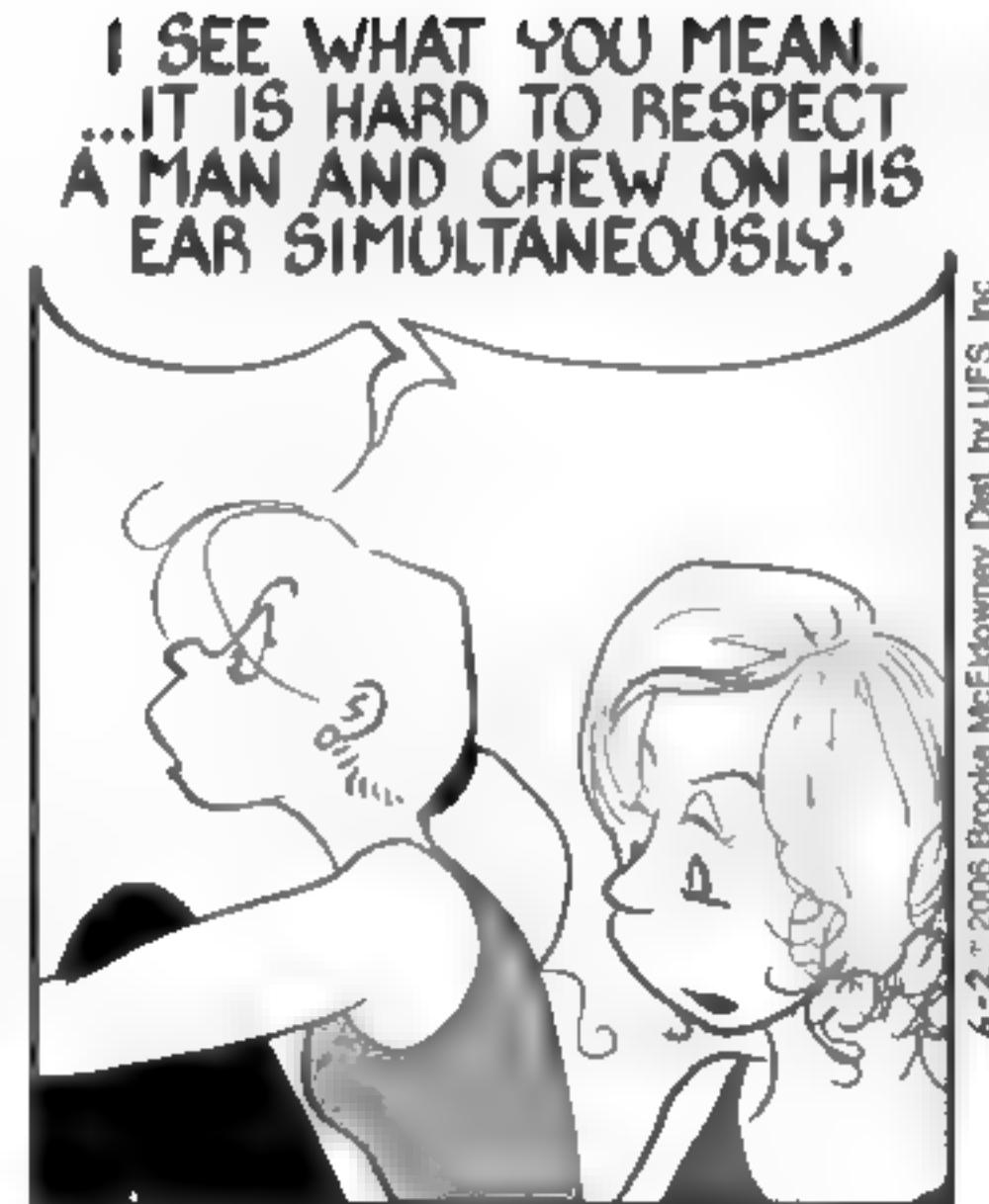


THE
WOMAN'S
GONE
ROGUE.



THAT
SCHOOL
HAD A
STRANGE
EFFECT
ON ALL
OF YOU.





DIANE AND I WERE DEBATING
LOVE AND RESPECT...MY
THESIS BEING THAT THE
DEMONSTRATION OF ONE
TENDS TO CROWD OUT
THE OTHER.

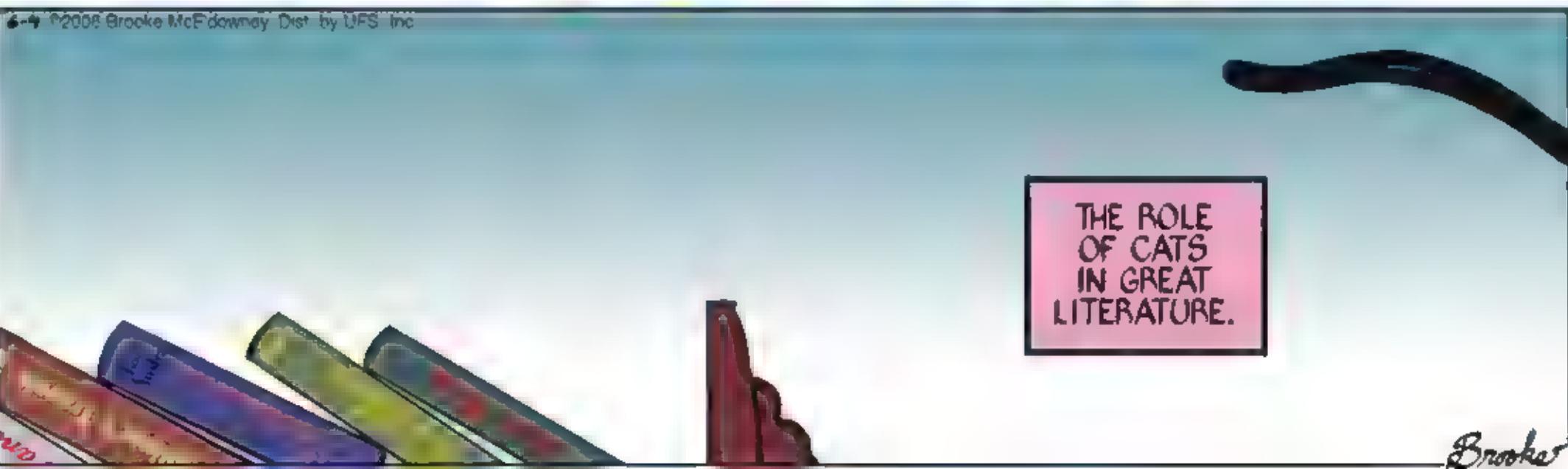
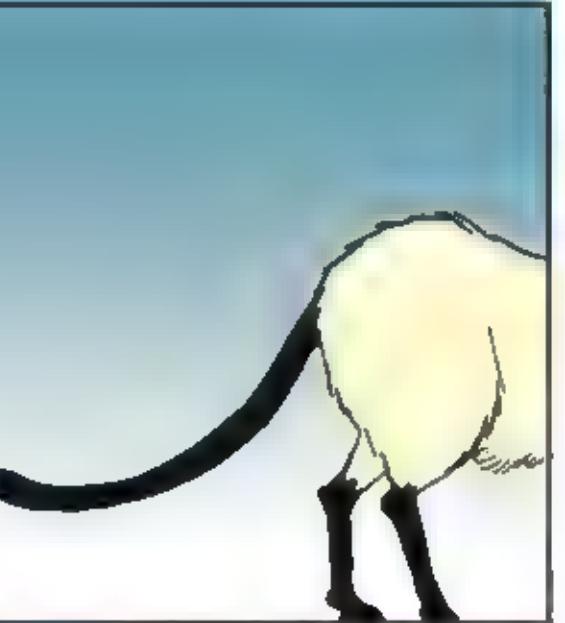


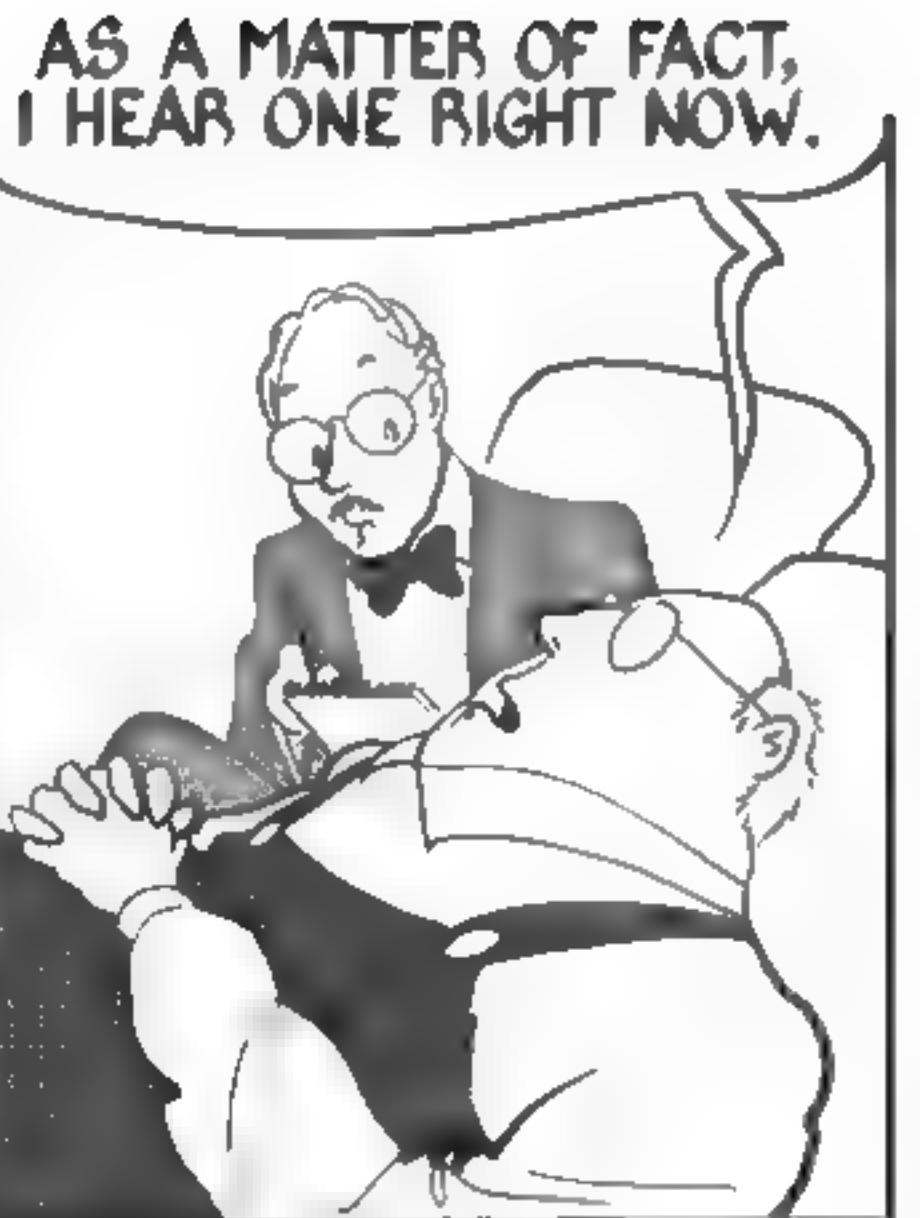
AND I NEVER FOR AN
INSTANT LOST MY GREATER
REGARD FOR YOU AS
A HUMAN BEING.





®





WHEN I ASK IF YOU HEAR VOICES, MR. THORAX, I MEAN OTHER THAN OUR OWN. DO YOU HEAR ANY LIKE THAT?



Brooks

YES...BUT INNER VOICES ARE NOT UNUSUAL FOR PEOPLE FROM MY WORLD. HOWEVER, I REFUSE TO LISTEN TO MINE.



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AND WHY IS THAT?
ARE YOU RESISTING ITS INFLUENCE?



NO.
IT TALKS WITH ITS MOUTH FULL.





MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX



ONE OF MY BOYHOOD AMBITIONS
WAS TO BECOME A GONDOLIER ON
THE STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

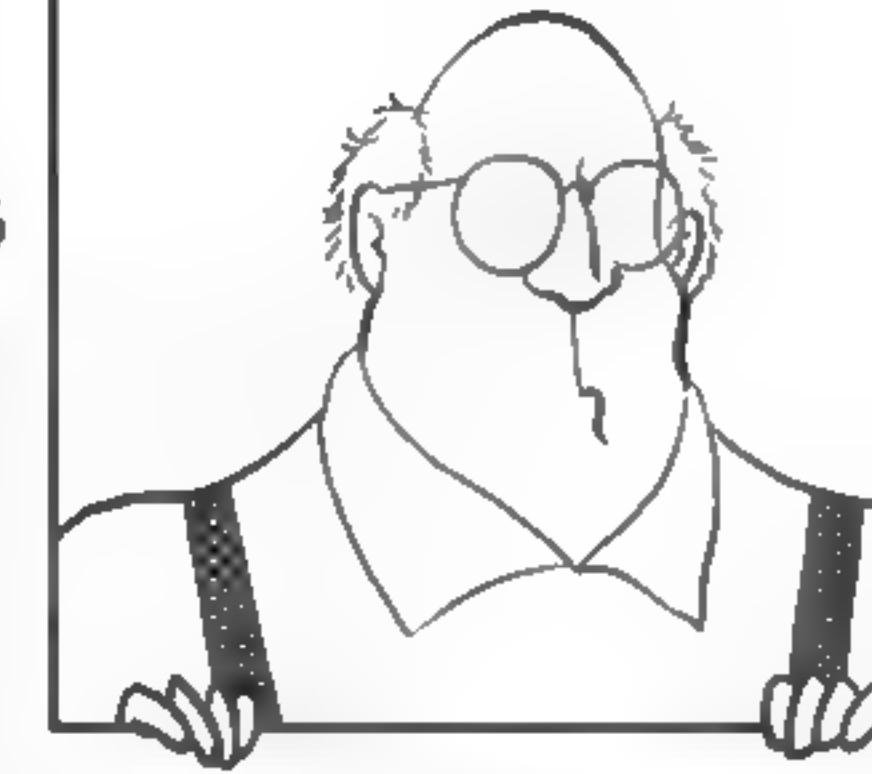
Brooke





MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

PEOPLE OF RELIGIOUS DISTINCTION MAINTAIN THAT HUMAN BEINGS, EXCLUSIVE OF ALL OTHER CREATURES, POSSESS SOULS AND ARE, THEREFORE, ENTITLED TO ADMITTANCE INTO HEAVEN. HUMAN BEINGS ALONE LIE, LIBEL, SLANDER, DEVISE POGROMS, MURDER FOR RECREATION AND PERFORM CROSSWORD PUZZLES. THIS SAYS NOTHING NEW ABOUT THE HUMAN CONDITION, BUT IT ILLUMINATES WHAT A SOUL CONTRIBUTES TO IT.



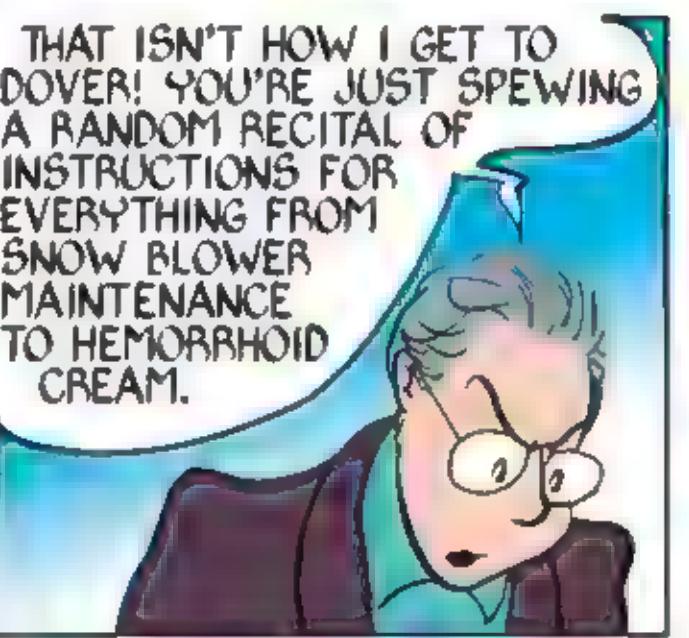
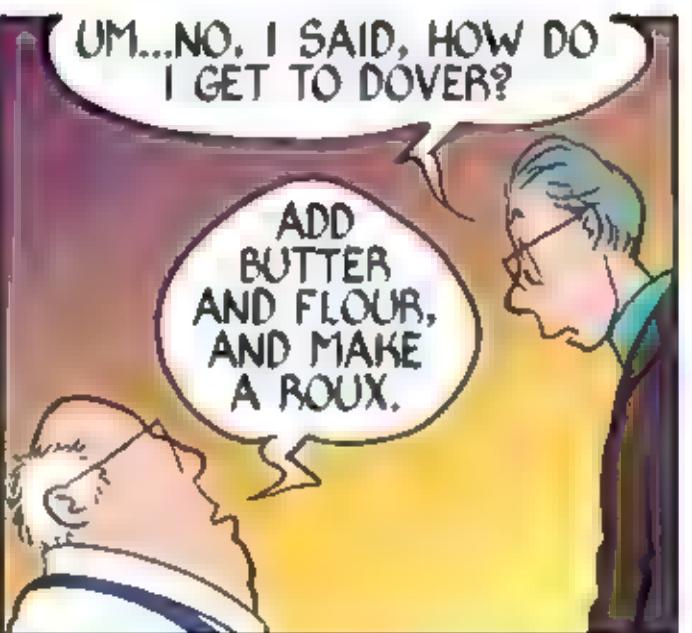
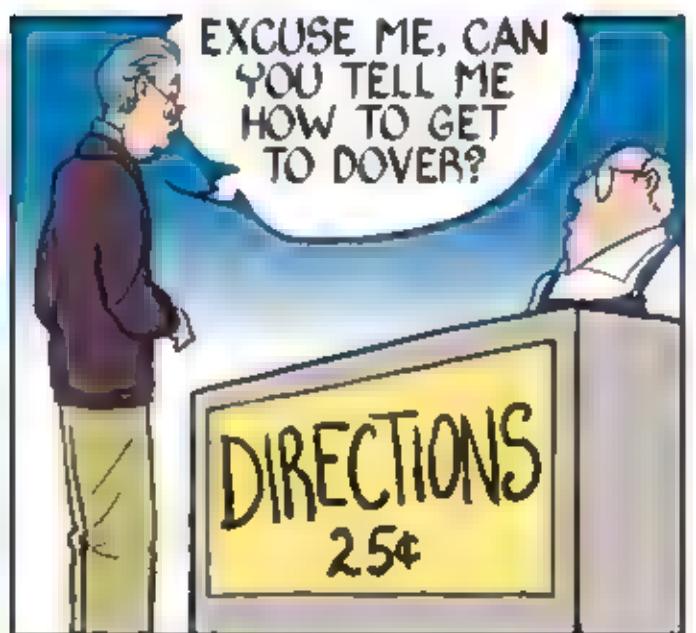
IT ALSO CLARIFIES THE ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR HEAVEN.

MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

Brooks



UNREQUITED
HUMAN ATTEMPTS TO
COMMUNICATE WITH
EXTRATERRESTRIAL
BEINGS TESTIFY TO
THE CERTAINTY OF
INTELLIGENT LIFE
IN THE UNIVERSE.
NOTHING COULD BE
MORE INTELLIGENT
THAN A REFUSAL
TO RETURN THE
CALL.



Dear Thorax,
My grandmother disapproves of my roommate and his friend. Is there anything I can do to reconcile her to my living arrangement and keep the peace?
Perplexed in NYC

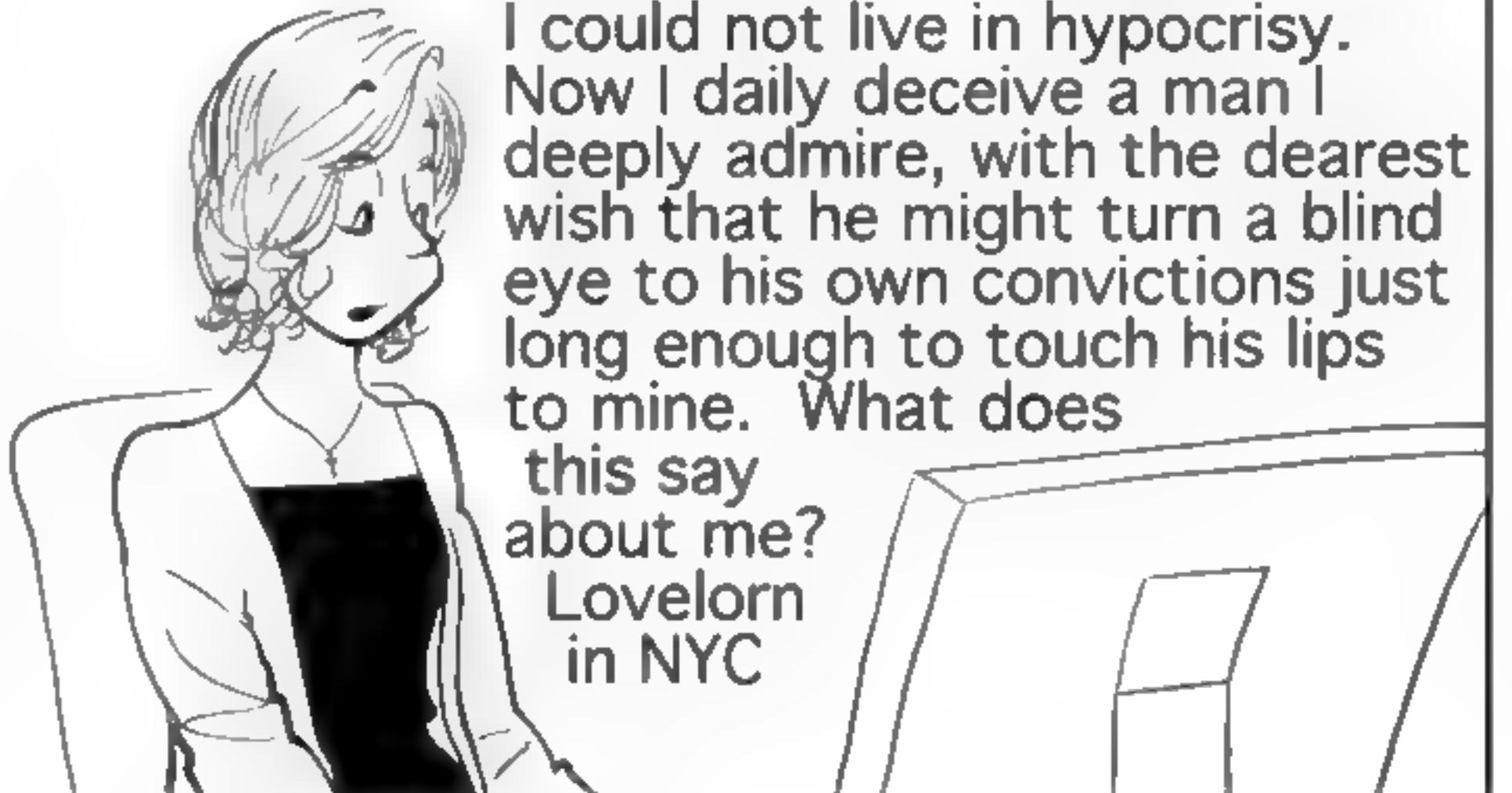
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Dear Perplexed,
Your grandmother is a control shark. She attracts her prey by withholding approval. Any effort to appease is like blood in the water. Stay out of it. Common interests will draw combatants together.



Dear Thorax,



I quit my order and left behind
a cloistered life all because
I could not live in hypocrisy.
Now I daily deceive a man I
deeply admire, with the dearest
wish that he might turn a blind
eye to his own convictions just
long enough to touch his lips
to mine. What does

this say
about me?
Lovelorn
in NYC

Brooke

Dear Lovelorn,

You're an optimist.



SO, BASICALLY,
MY OLD ENGLISH
TEACHER HAS
BEEN ALLOWING
FATHER DURLY
TO THINK
SHE IS HER
OWN NIECE
DIANE FOR A
COUPLE OF
MONTHS.
AND NOW
SHE CAN'T
FIGURE
A WAY
OUT OF
IT.

YEAH,
BUT WHO
IS THIS GUY,
ANYWAY?
THE BIGGEST
DOOFUS
IN NEW
YORK?

EVIDENTLY
THE MOST
CELEBRATED.

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Brooke

DIANE'S ENMIREDE IN
QUICKSAND. SHE'S TOTALLY
INFATUATED WITH FATHER
DURLY.

WHAT IS
THIS GUY?
SOME KIND
OF DISH?

TOO ECCLESIASTICAL TO BE
A DISH...MORE OF A
DESSERT MAYBE.
...TIRAMISU.

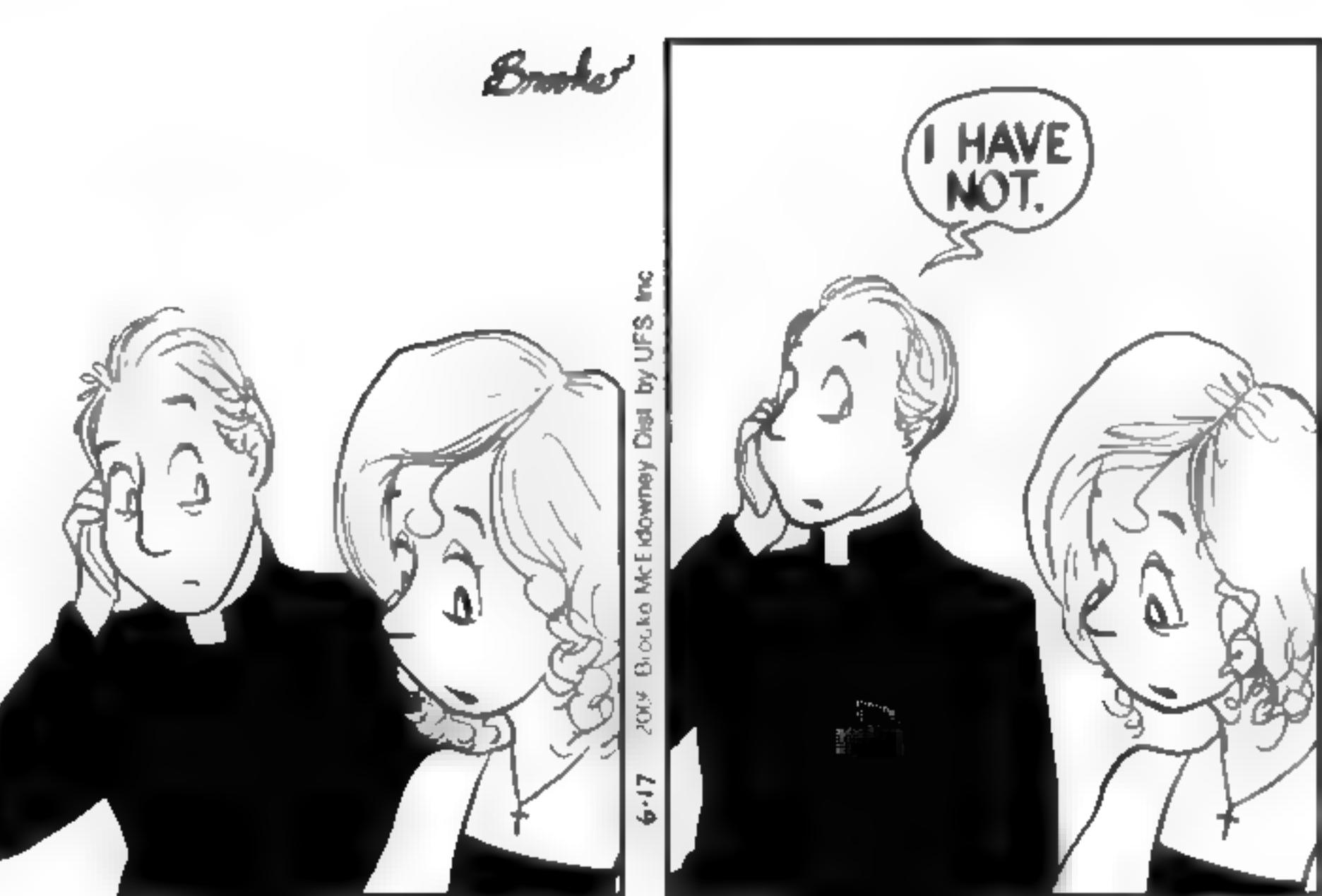
REALLY
CUSTARDY,
WITH COFFEE-
SOAKED LADY-
FINGERS?

I DEFINITELY CAN'T SEE
HIM WITHOUT THINKING
"COFFEE-SOAKED
LADYFINGERS."

Oooo,
MOMMA!
GIMME
A FORK!

ALL
AT ONCE
I'M FLATTERED...
...AND TWISTING
IN GEHENNA.







MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

Brooke



THERE'S NO BETTER
WAY TO SPEND A DAY
THAN RIDING THE
CABOOSE ON A
TRAIN OF THOUGHT.

MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

Brooks'



COMMUNITY
THEATER
IS THE MOST
EFFECTIVE WAY
TO CULL THE
NEXT GENERATION
OF ACTORS BY
MAKING DRAMA,
AS A PROFESSION,
REPELLENT
TO THE
TALENTED.



Brooke

MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX:
HONCHODOM



HONCHODOM EXISTS EVERYWHERE. IT IS CARVED OUT AT THE TOP OF EVERY PECKING ORDER IN EVERY CORPORATION, SCHOOL, COMMUNITY THEATER, BLACK MARKET, ROTARY CLUB, HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION, PROSTITUTION RING AND SENATE. HONCHODOM IS TAILOR-MADE FOR THE BLAND, GLAD-HANDING, FIGURE-HEADED AND SOULLESS. IT IS THE SPECIAL AERIE FROM WHICH THE MEDIOCRE MAY PUNISH THE GIFTED FOR BEING SO.





MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

Brooks

"HOT TALK" TELEPHONE SERVICES ALLOW THE IRRETRIEVABLY PATHETIC TO UNDRESS A WOMAN NOT WITH THEIR EYES BUT WITH THEIR EARS, THEREBY IMAGINING WHAT SHE SOUNDS LIKE NAKED.



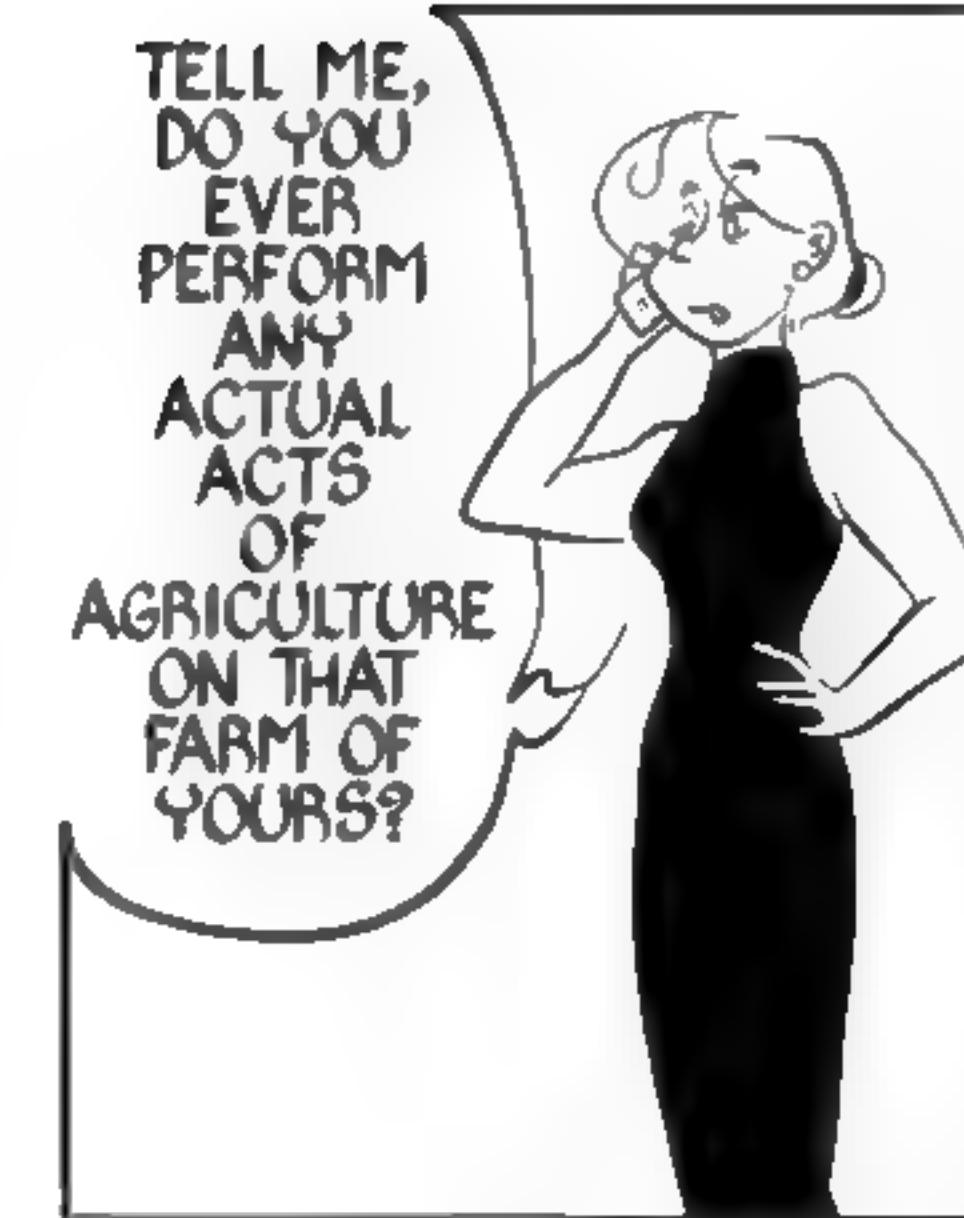
I JUST PUT ON THIS DRESS
EDDA LEFT BEHIND. I THINK
IT'S WAY TOO TIGHT AND
SHORT FOR ME.



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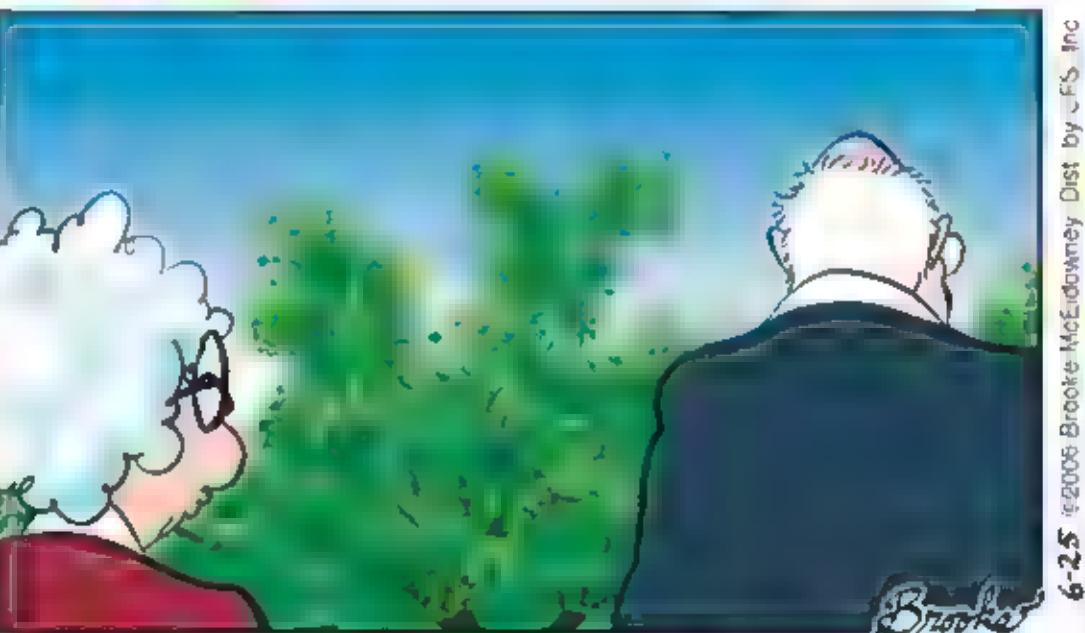


Brooke





A cartoon illustration of a man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a blue robe, speaking from a podium. A speech bubble contains his dialogue.



MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX



I DO NOT LOVE MY COUNTRY.
HOWEVER, I FIND I AM
SEXUALLY ATTRACTED TO IT.





Brooks

HUMAN BEINGS ALONE
POSSESS A FUNDAMENTAL
MORAL GRASP OF THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
RIGHT AND WRONG,
WITHOUT WHICH THEY
MIGHT PROCEED THROUGH
LIFE INDISCRIMINATELY
DOING RIGHT.



MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

Brooks



**Dear Thorax,
I am in love with a woman
whom I cannot have.
She is pledged to another.
Should I tell her of my
ardor anyway, or enlist
in the French
Foreign Legion?**

**Sadly Sighing
in Pawtucket**

Brooke



Dear Sadly Sighing,

**The question is not one of becoming a
legionnaire for this woman, but whether you
would shave your armpits, tweeze your brows,
spackle and draw on your own face, and gird
your body in wire-reinforced trusses for her.**

**If you are not prepared to go
to the lengths she employs
every day for love,
camel spit and
French verb
forms are what
you deserve.**



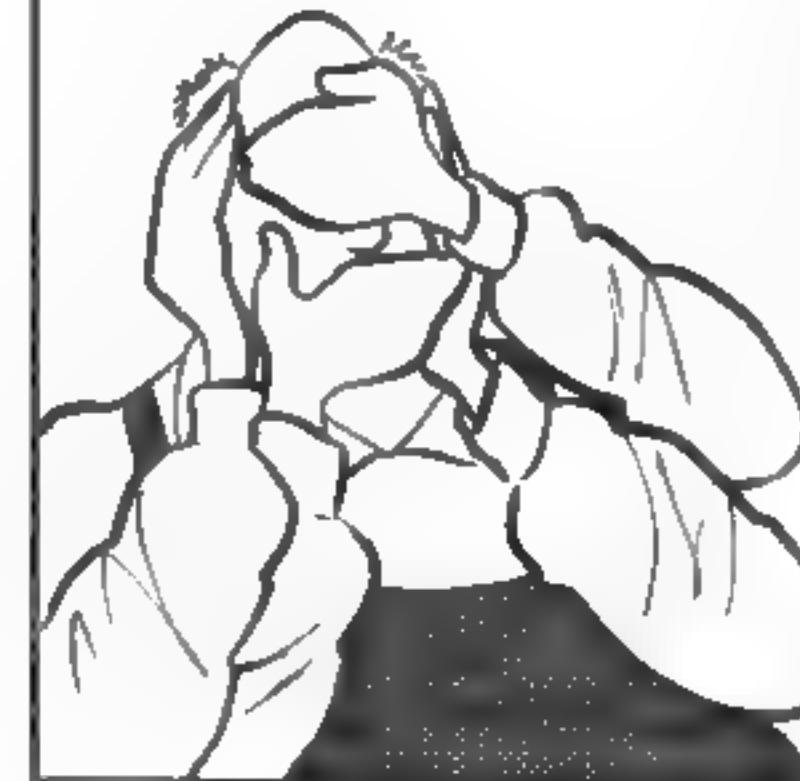


IT IS SAID THAT
AN ARGUMENT IS
BEST ADDRESSED
BY EXAMINING IT
FROM EVERY ANGLE.
MY PERSONAL
FAVORITE IS
37.4 DEGREES.

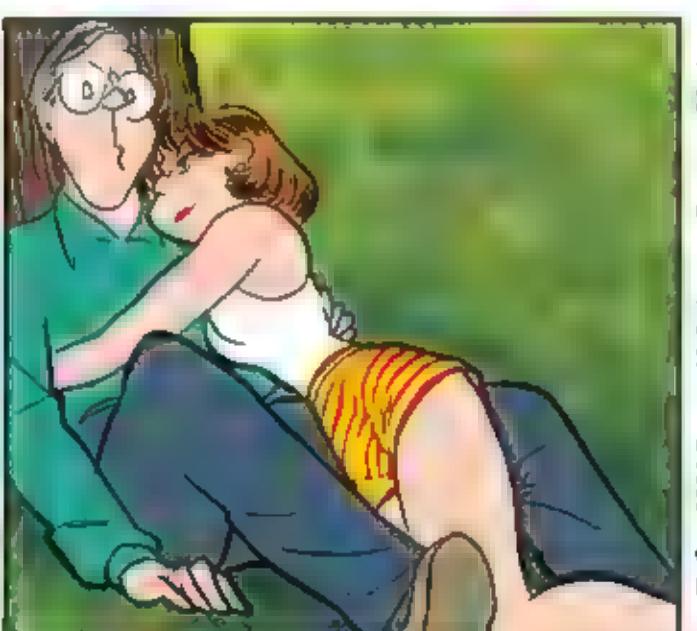
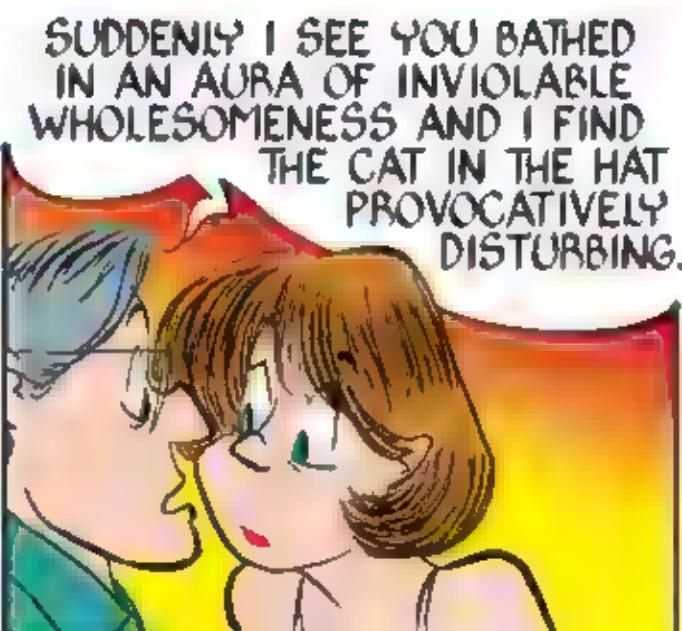
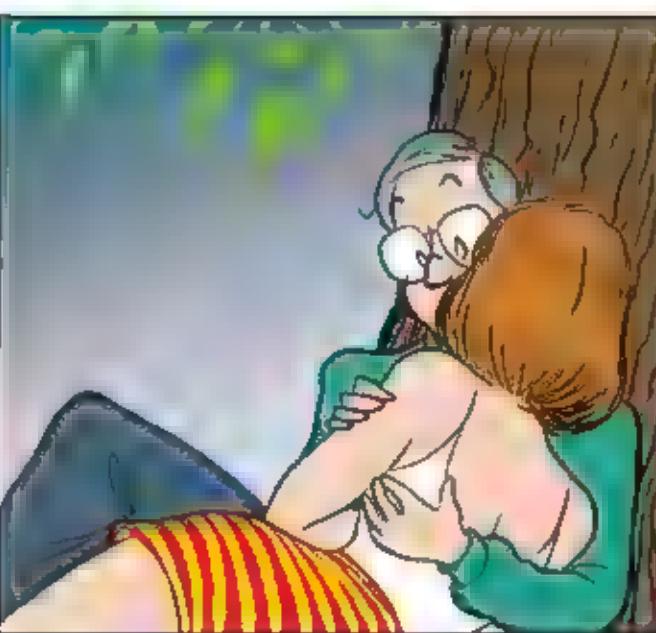


MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX

Brooke



IGNORANCE IS NATURE'S
MOST ABUNDANT FUEL
FOR DECISION-MAKING.
FACTS STIFLE THE WILL, HOBBLE
CONVICTION. IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO ARRIVE AT A CONCLUSION
BURDENED BY INFORMATION.
THAT EXPLAINS WHY THE MOST
CONFIDENT AND WILLING JUDGE
IS IGNORANCE, WHY STUPIDITY
IS THE EXECUTIONER –
AND WHY THE PRESS
AND THE POLITICIANS
PIMP FOR BOTH.

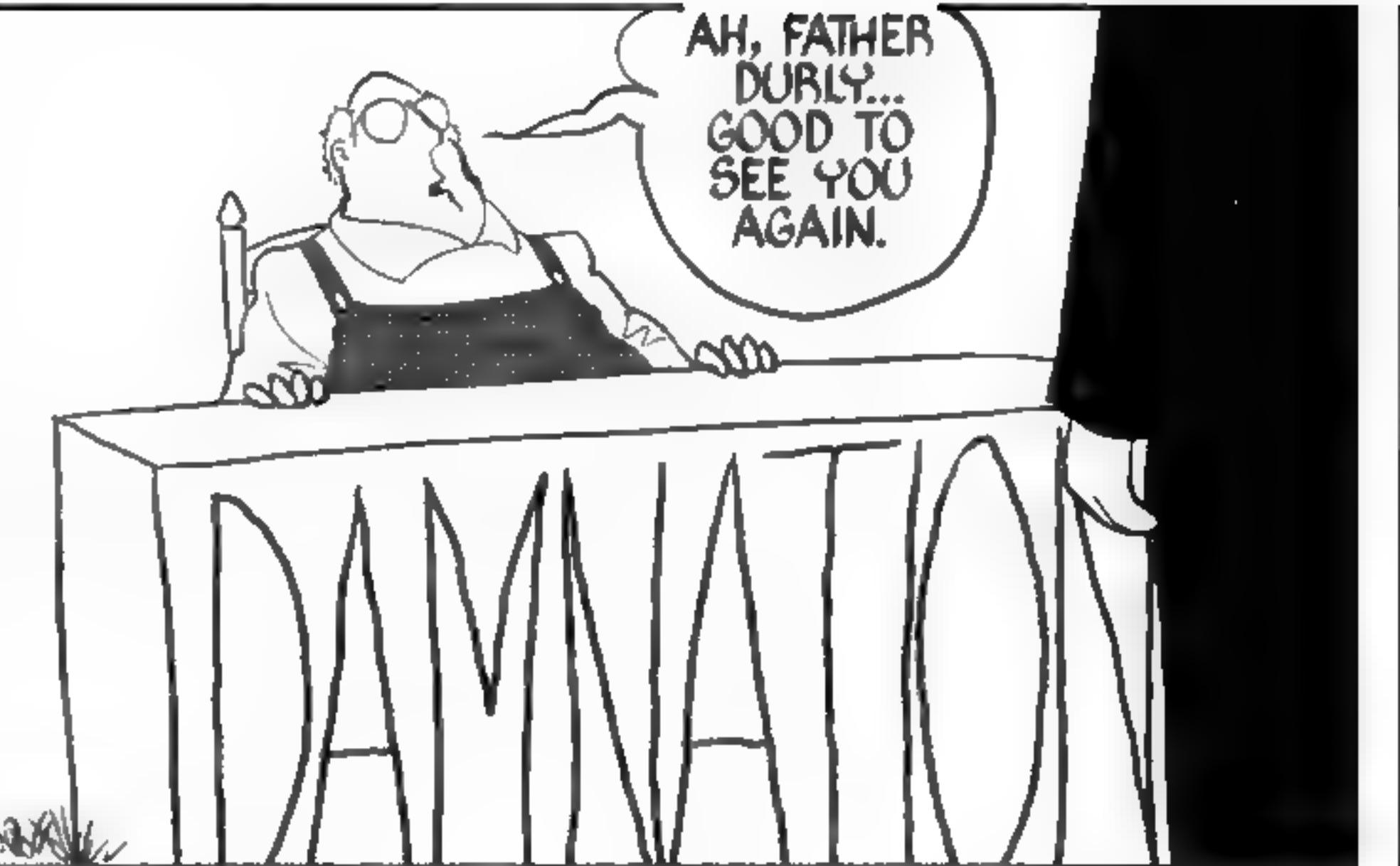


WHAT'S THE POINT IN CONSULTING
A DEITY WHEN ALL WE DO IS
INTERPOSE OURSELVES
TO SPEAK FOR HIM?
GOD IS UNDER OUR
THUMB. I NEED
A FEW NON-
INSTITUTIONAL
ANSWERS.

Brooke

MONTY ALMIGHTY...
...PLEASE HOLD.

A SUBSIDIARY
OF
LOVING SHEPHERD
INDUSTRIES LLC



YOU DON'T INTEND ME TO
BELIEVE YOU'RE METING OUT
ETERNAL TORMENT FROM
A ROADSIDE FRUIT
STAND?!

IN FACT,
I'M JUST THE
CONTRACTOR.

I DO THE ACTUAL PLUNGING
OF MISCREANTS INTO
HELLFIRE...
...BUT IT'S
MONTY
WHO
MAKES
UP THE
LIST AND
CHECKS
IT TWICE.

HE
SOUNDS MORE
LIKE SANTA
CLAUS THAN
THE ALMIGHTY.

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MY CLIENT LIST IS
ADMITTEDLY EXTENSIVE,
BUT I'VE NEVER...

...UM.....
...EXCUSE ME,
I HAVE
TO MAKE
A SHORT
CALL...

KRIS?..THORAX...LOOK,
A FINE POINT JUST AROSE
ABOUT WHAT I'VE BEEN
DOING WITH THE
NAUGHTY CHILDREN.
I WANT TO MAKE
SURE WE'RE ON
THE SAME
PAGE...

Brooke

IT'S ONE THING TO SEE TO
THE DAMNATION OF SINNERS,
BUT WHAT ABOUT THEIR
SALVATION? WHAT
IF SOMEONE COMES
TO YOU SAYING,
"SAVE ME"?
WHAT DO YOU
DO THEN?

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Brooks

ONE OF THE PERKS OF BEING
MONTY'S CONTRACTOR IS
I GET THE INSIDE SCOOP
ON FUTURE EVENTS...
...FOR INSTANCE, THERE'S
THE LOCUST BLACKOUT IN
NEBRASKA, THE
MAYONNAISE
RIOTS IN
MAINE...

Brooks

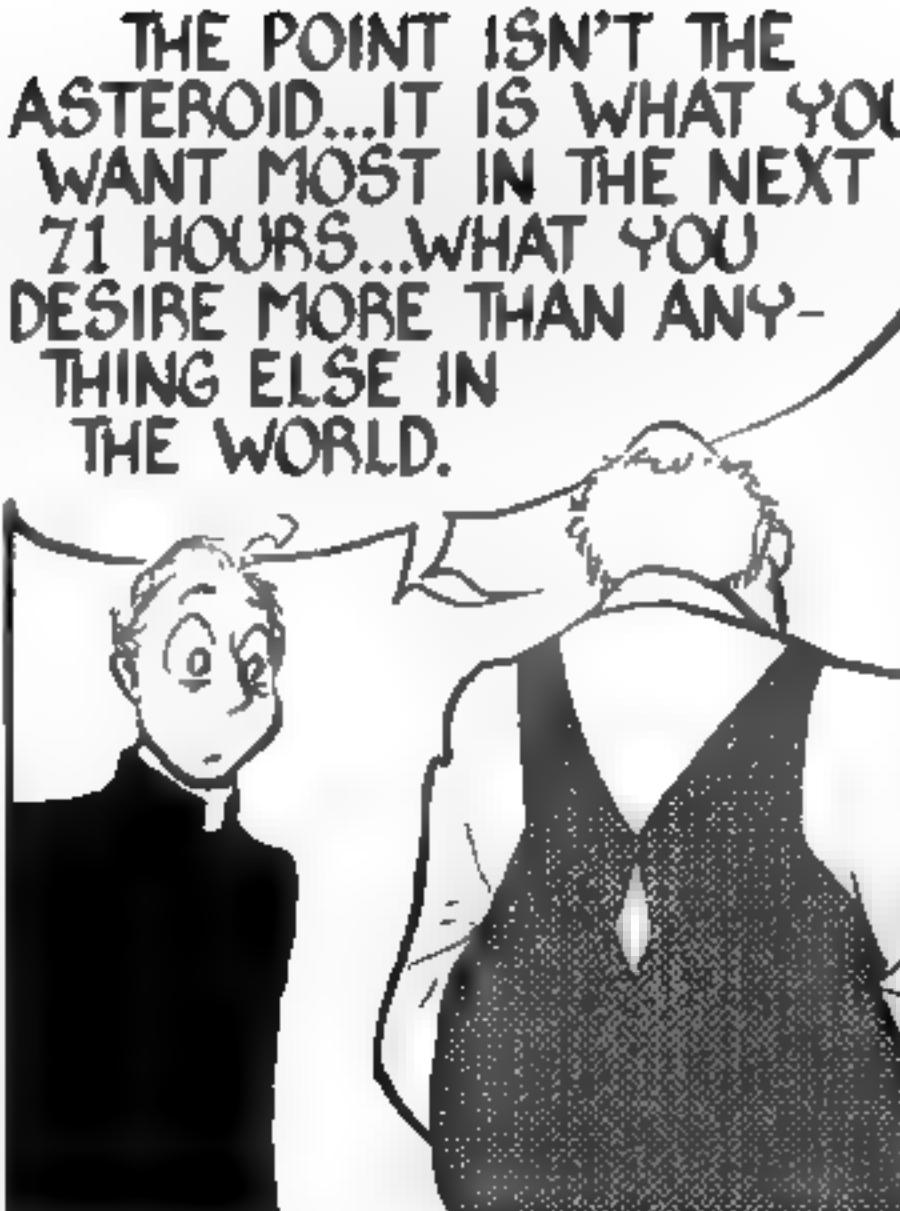
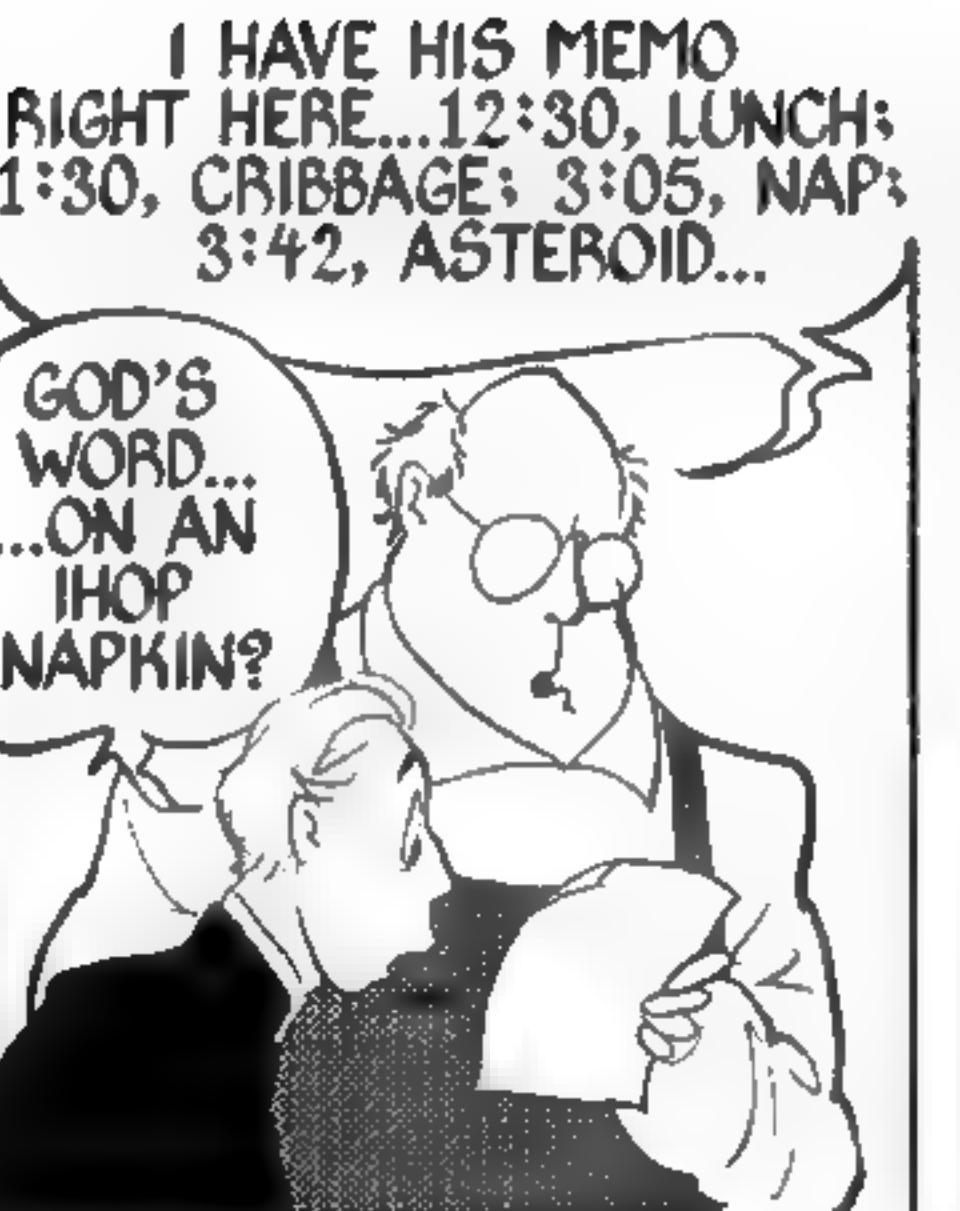
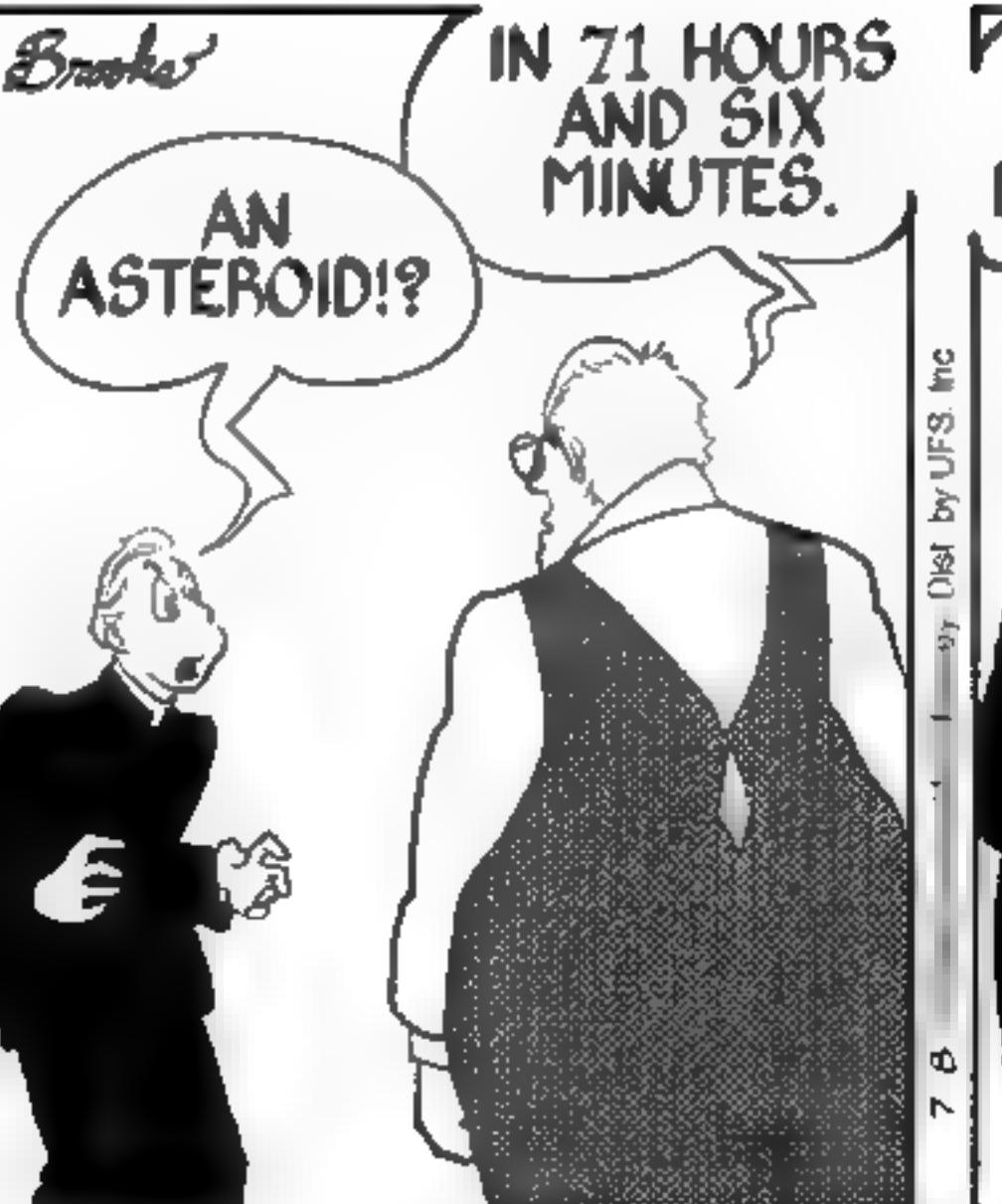
THE SPONTANEOUSLY
COMBUSTING FIFE AND DRUM
CORPS IN PERTH AMBOY,
THE MOMENT WHEN THE
WORD "NUCLEAR" IS
PRONOUNCED CORRECTLY
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.,
CAUSING TIRE-SCREECHING
AND STUPEFACTION
IN THE STREETS...

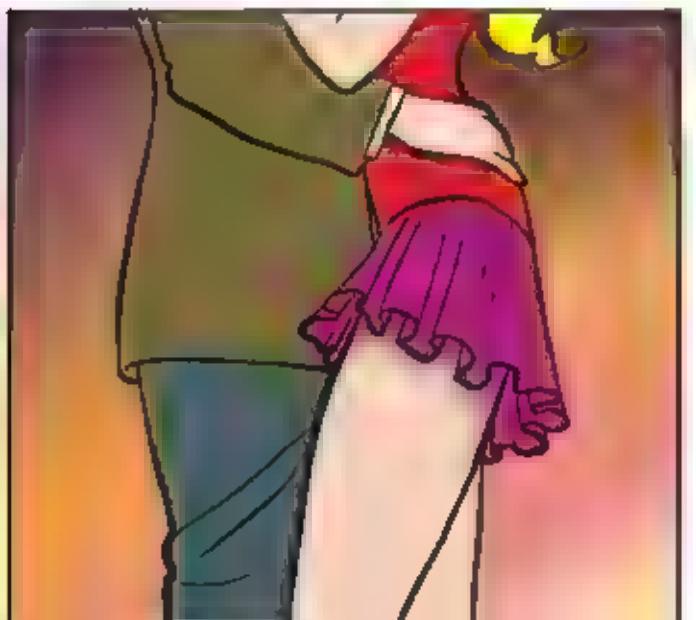
...AND ALL THIS WILL
OCCUR WITHIN THE NEXT
71 HOURS.

DON'T
YOU MEAN
THE NEXT
72 HOURS?

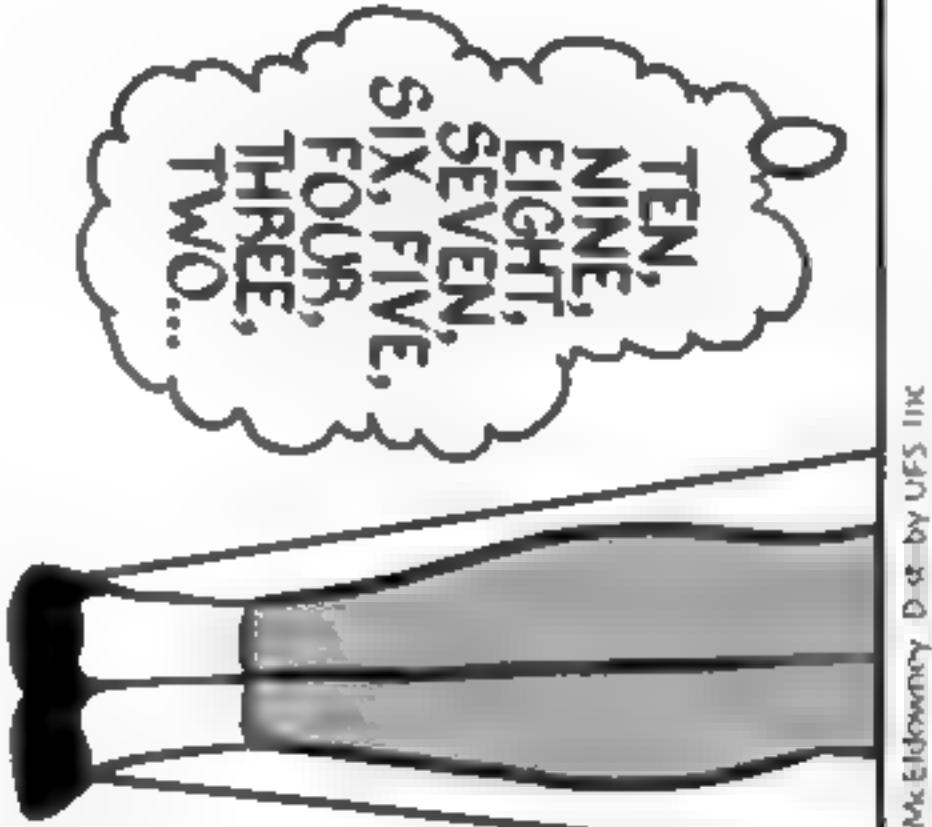
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OH...
...DID I FORGET
TO MENTION THE
ASTEROID?

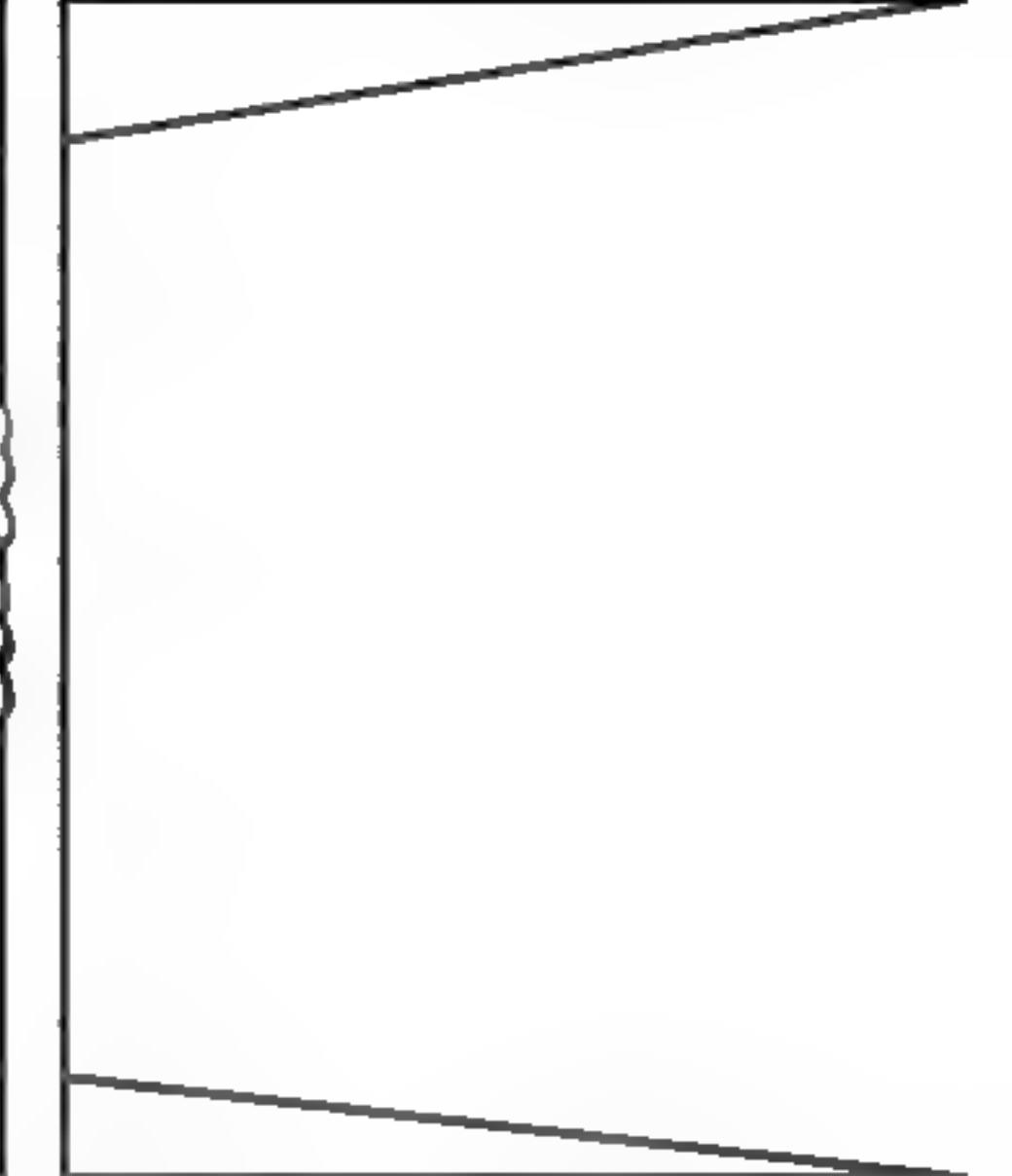
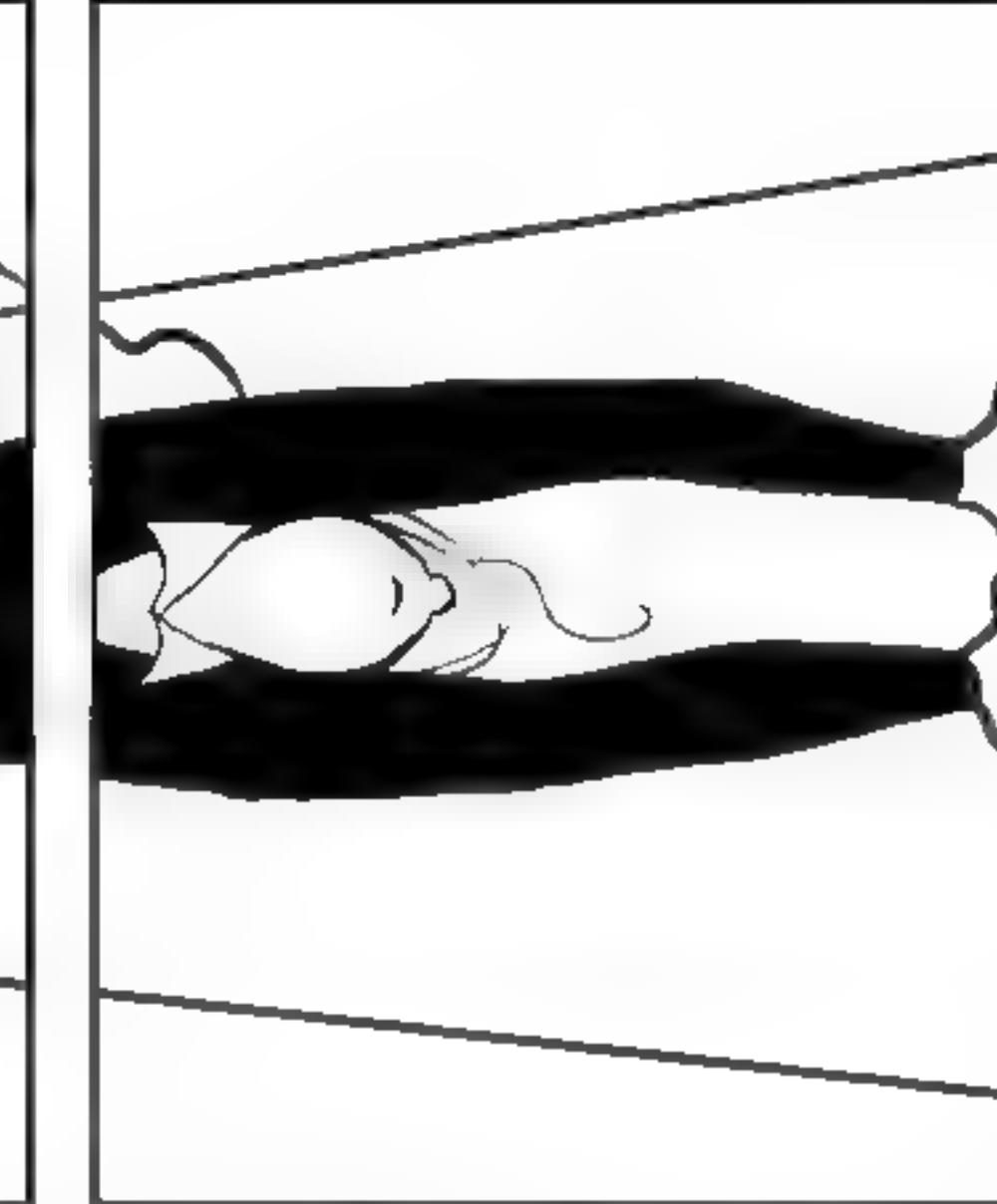




Brooks



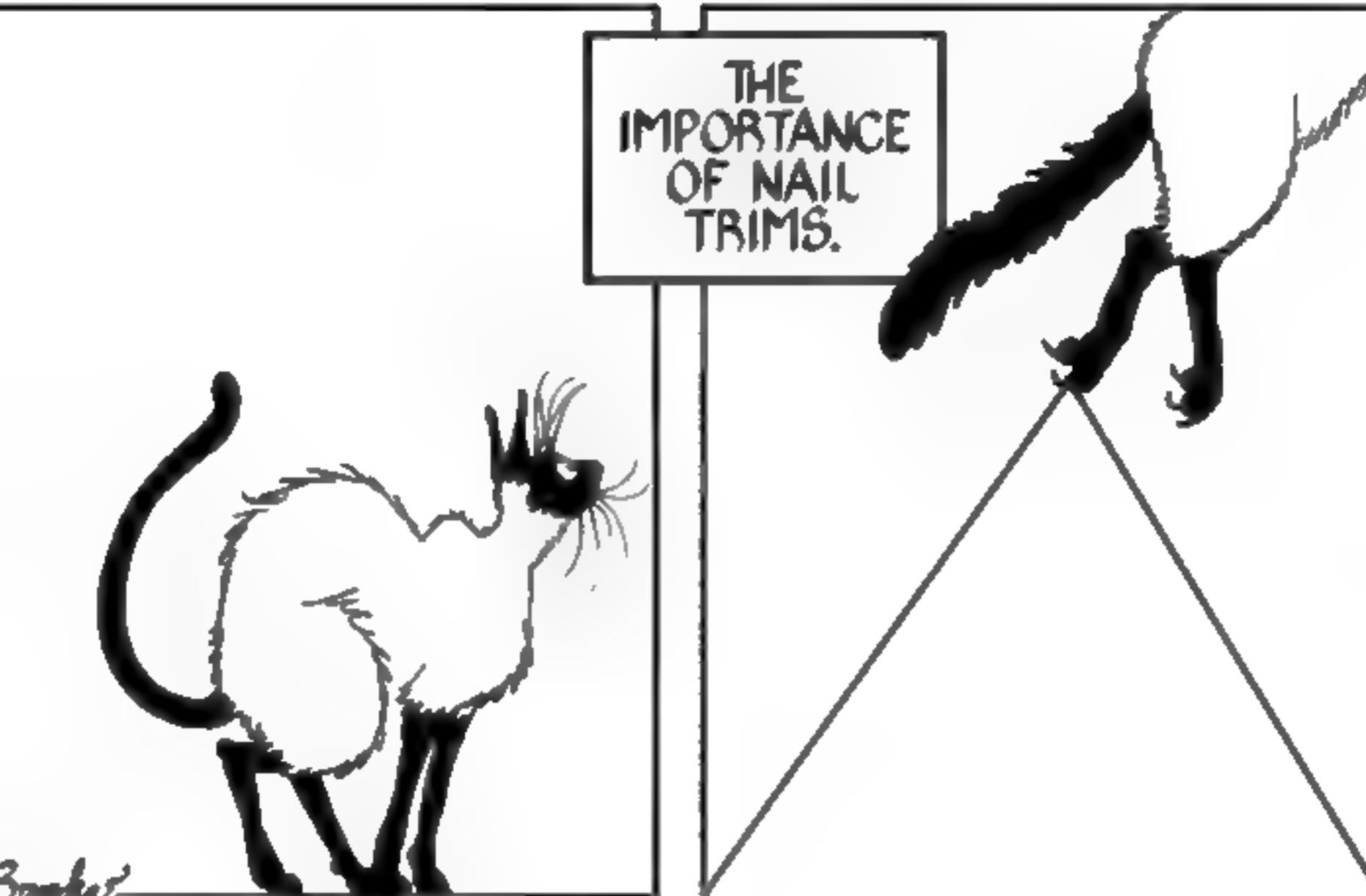
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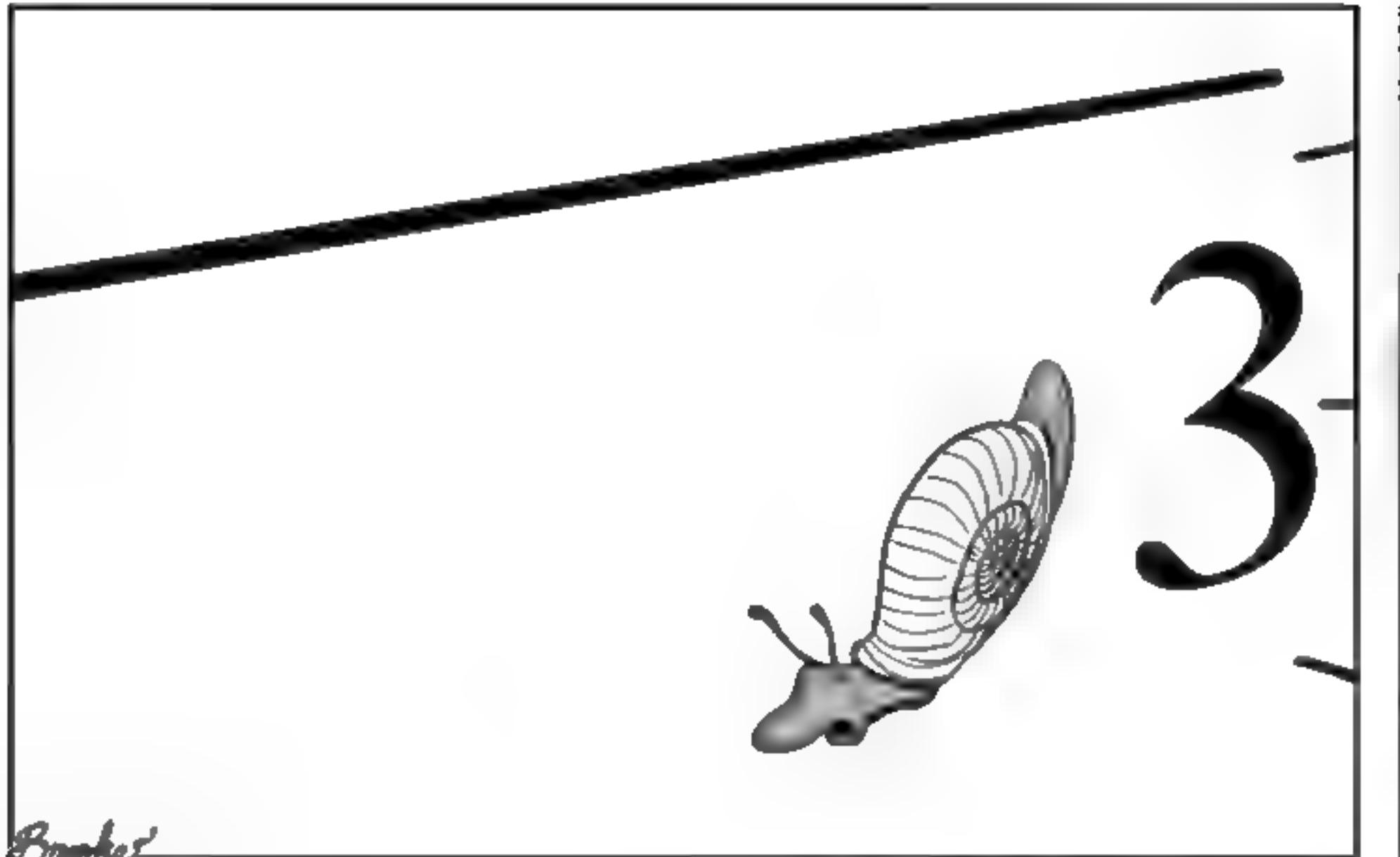
Barker

HALLMARKS
OF FELINITY
No. 183



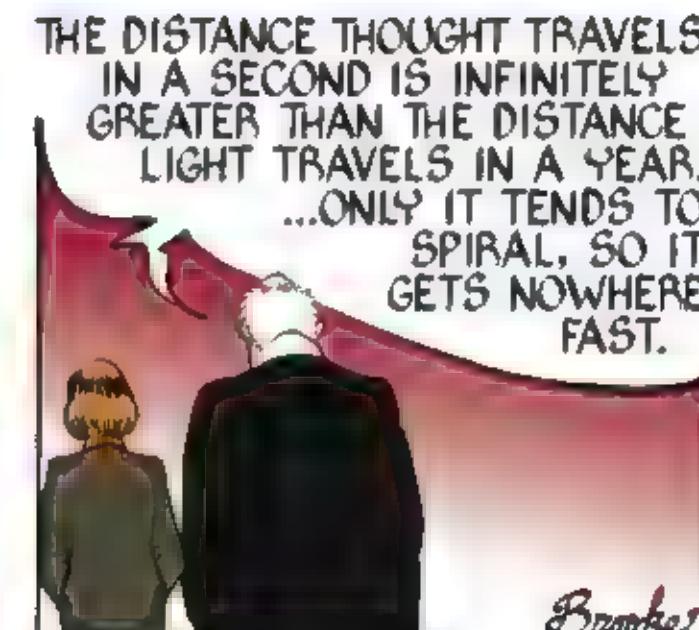
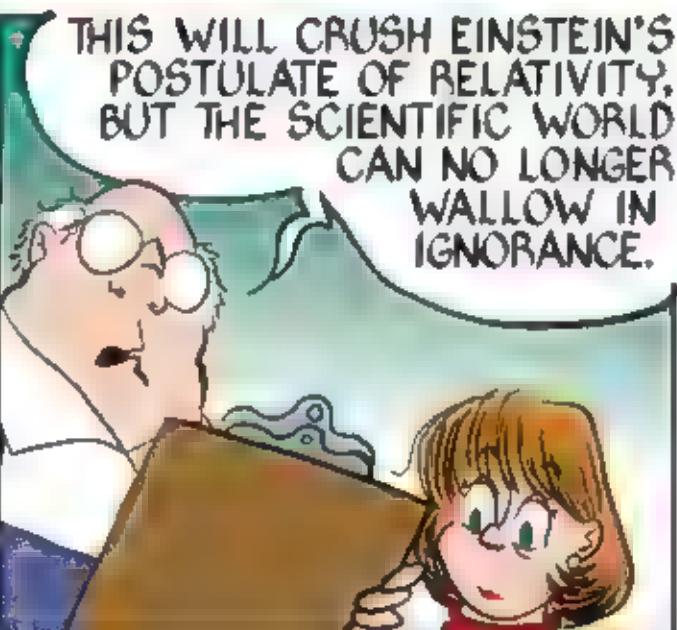
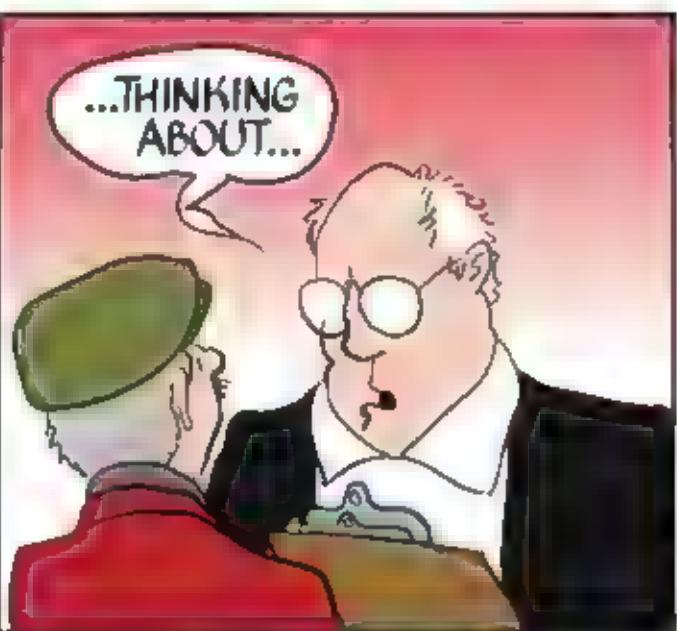
FLAWED
VIGILANCE





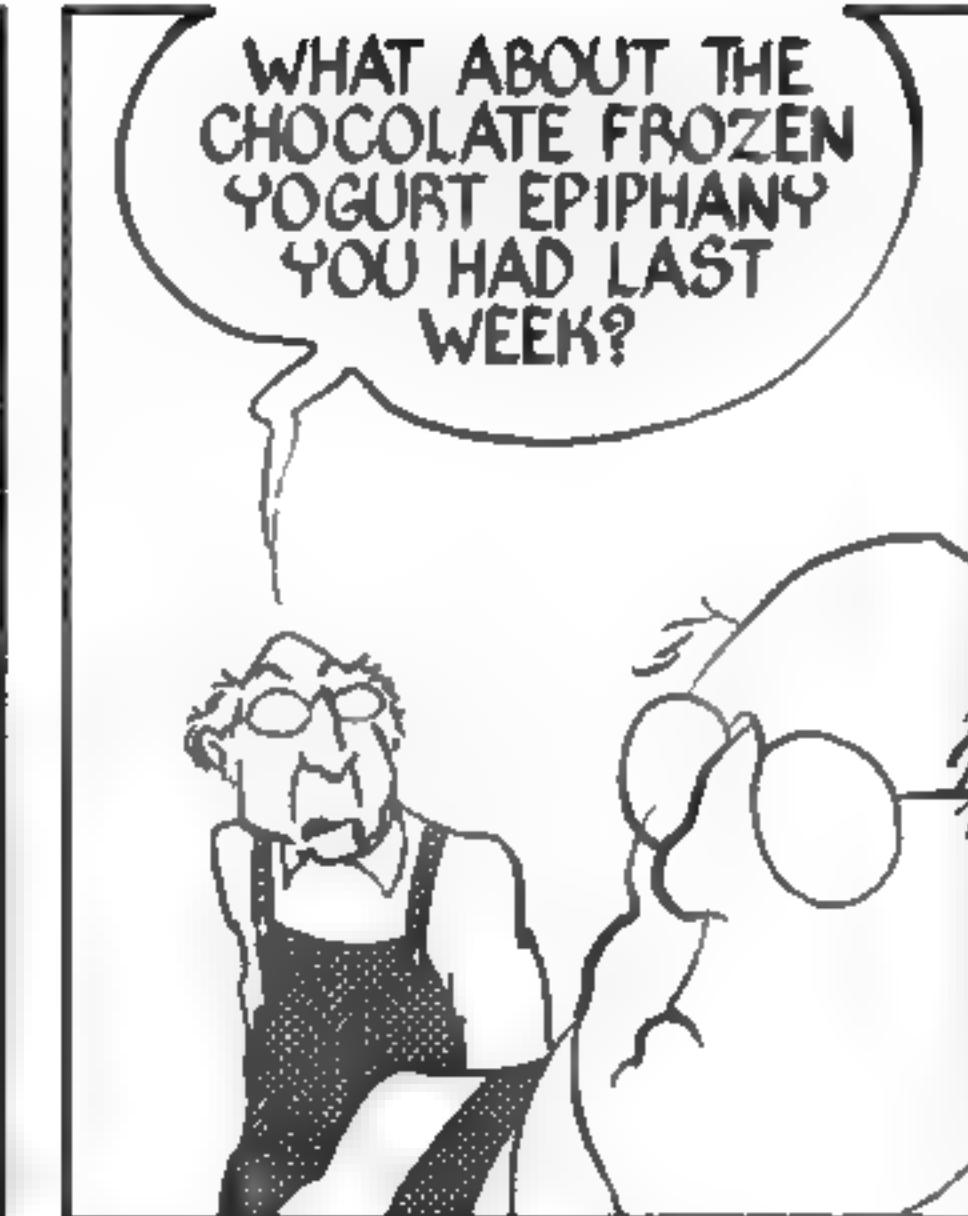
9 CHICKWEED LANE

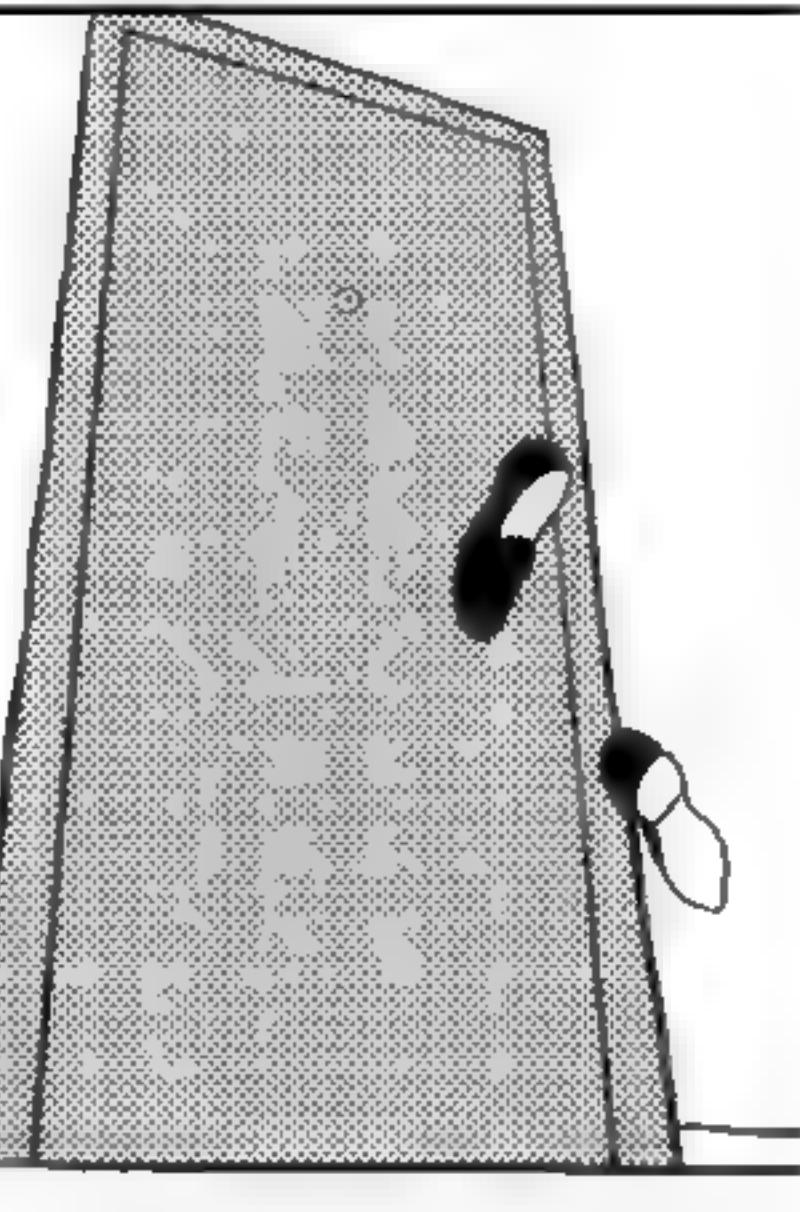
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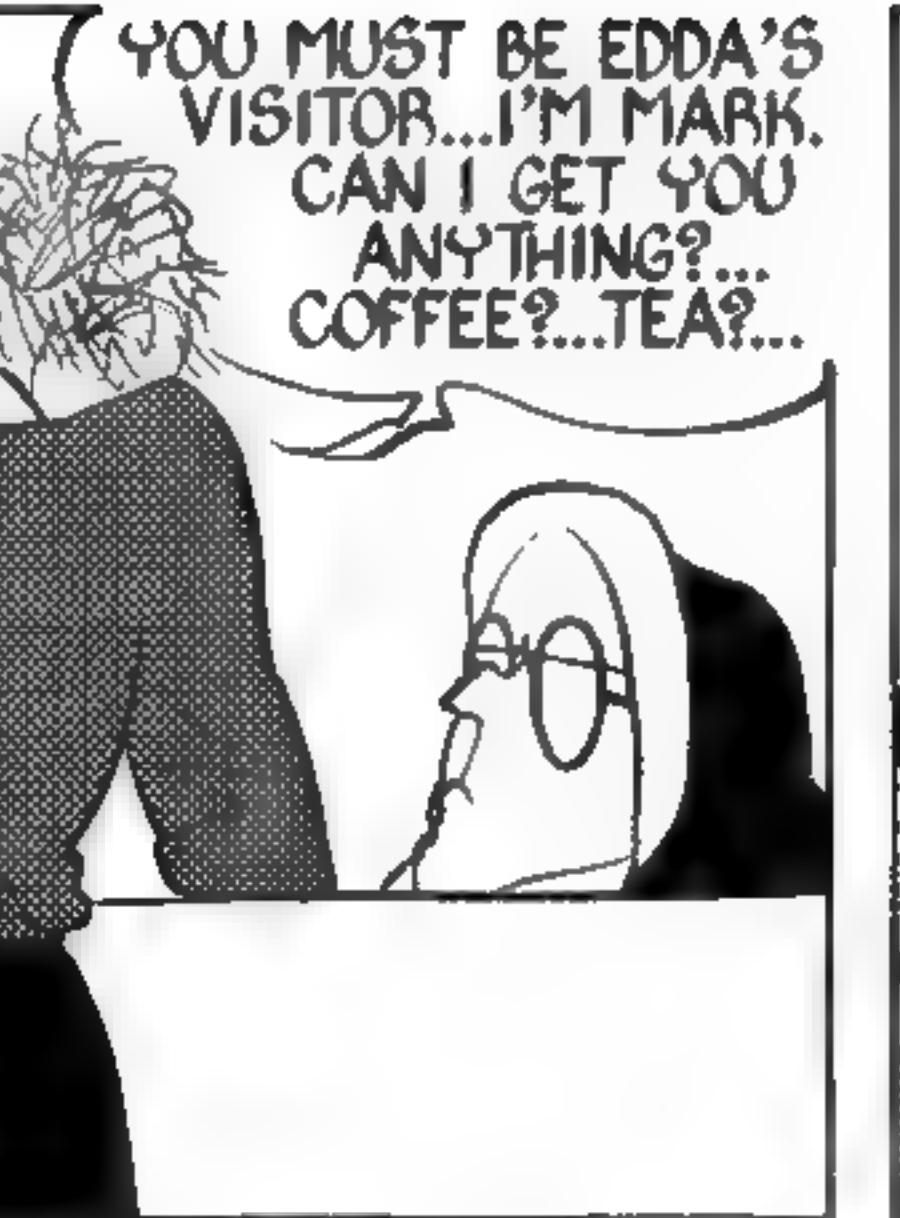
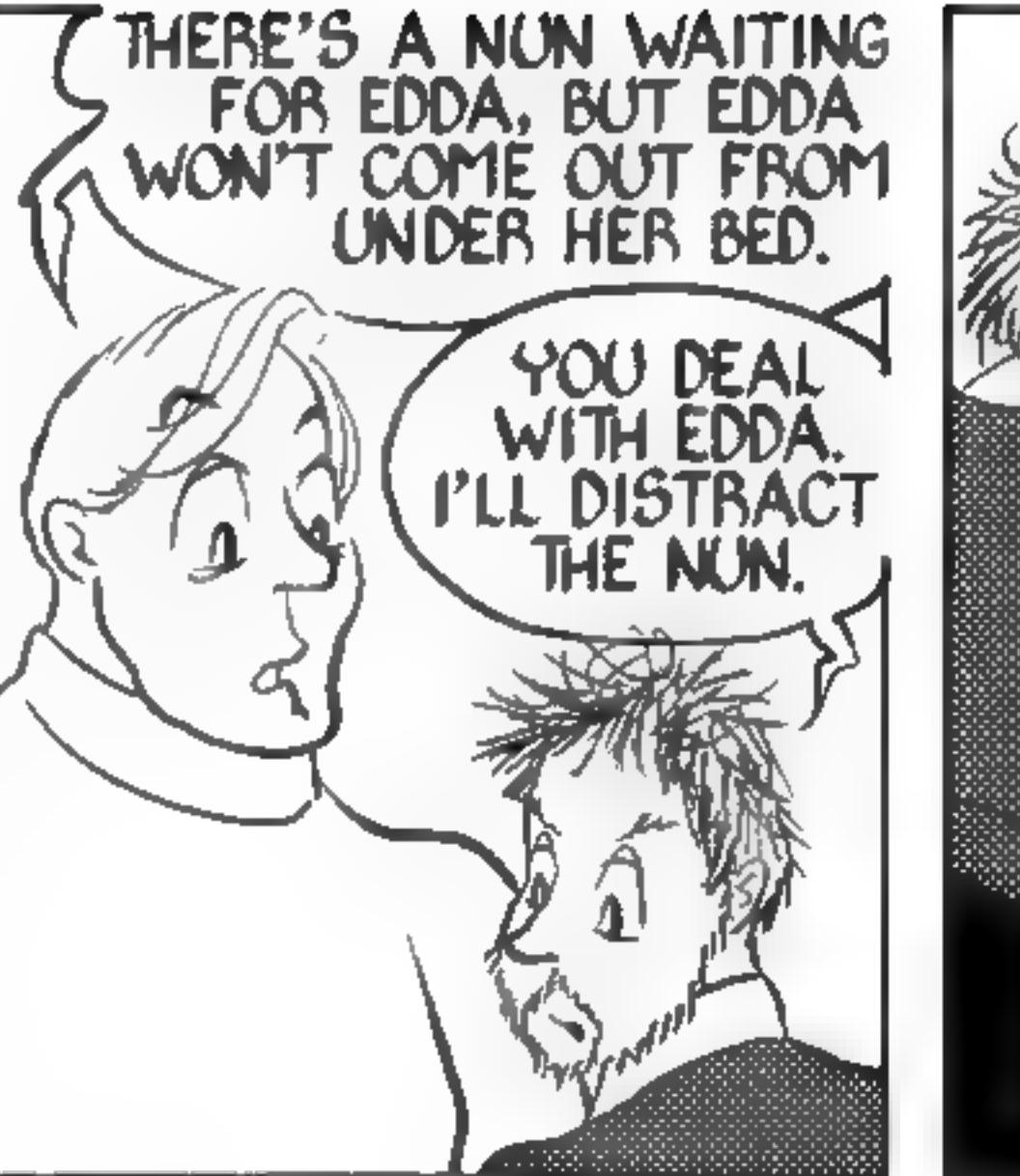


Brooke

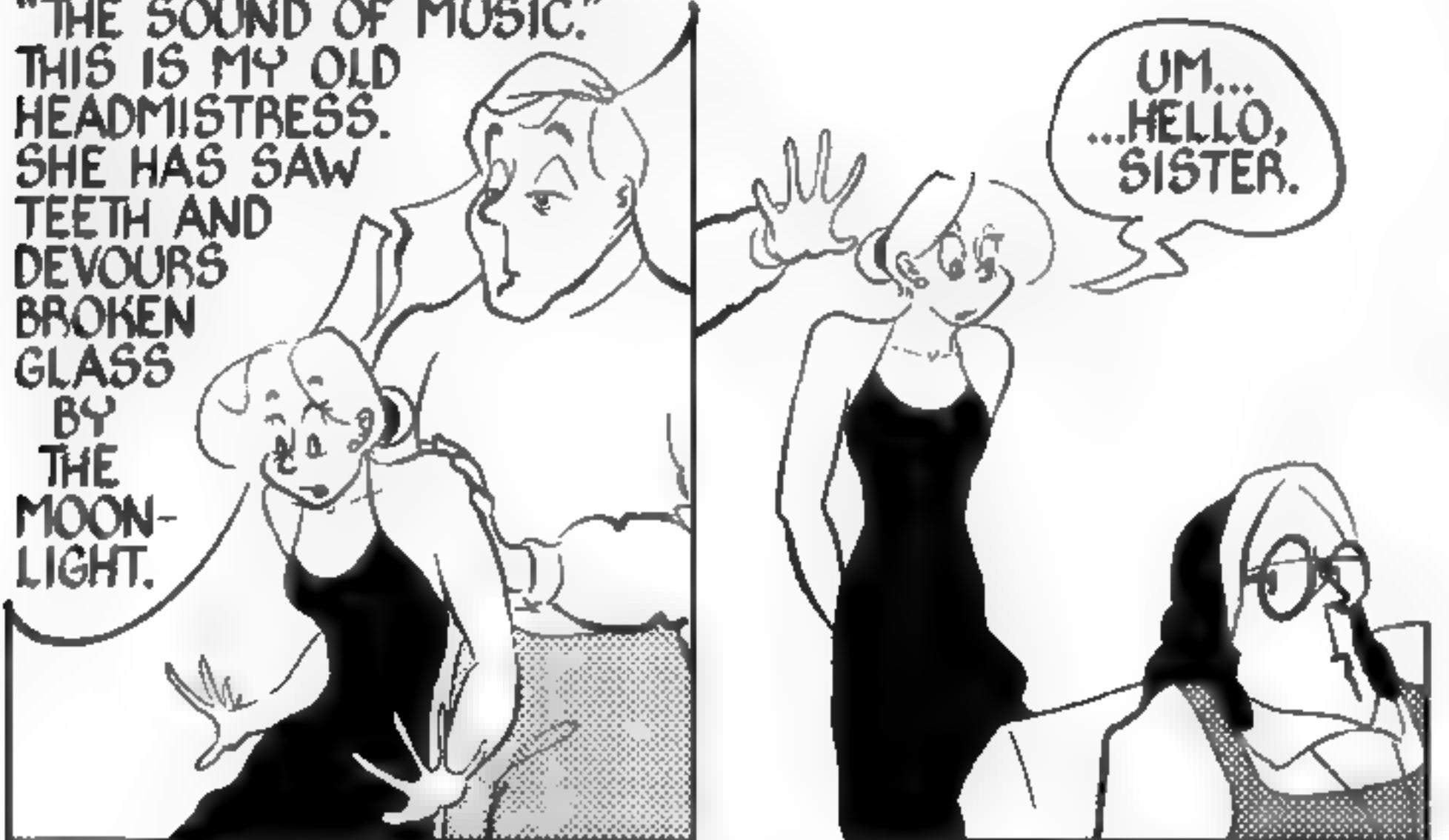
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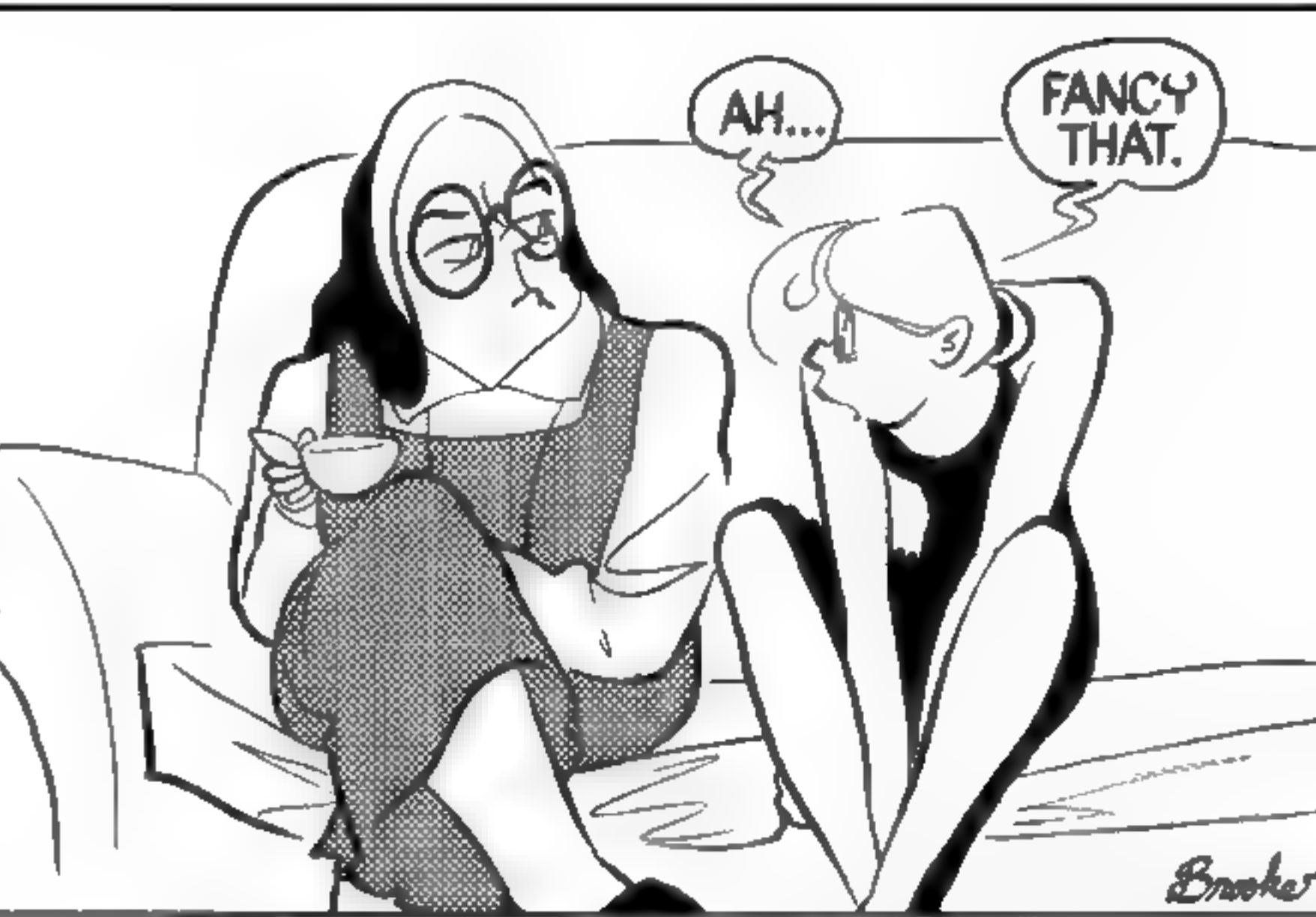




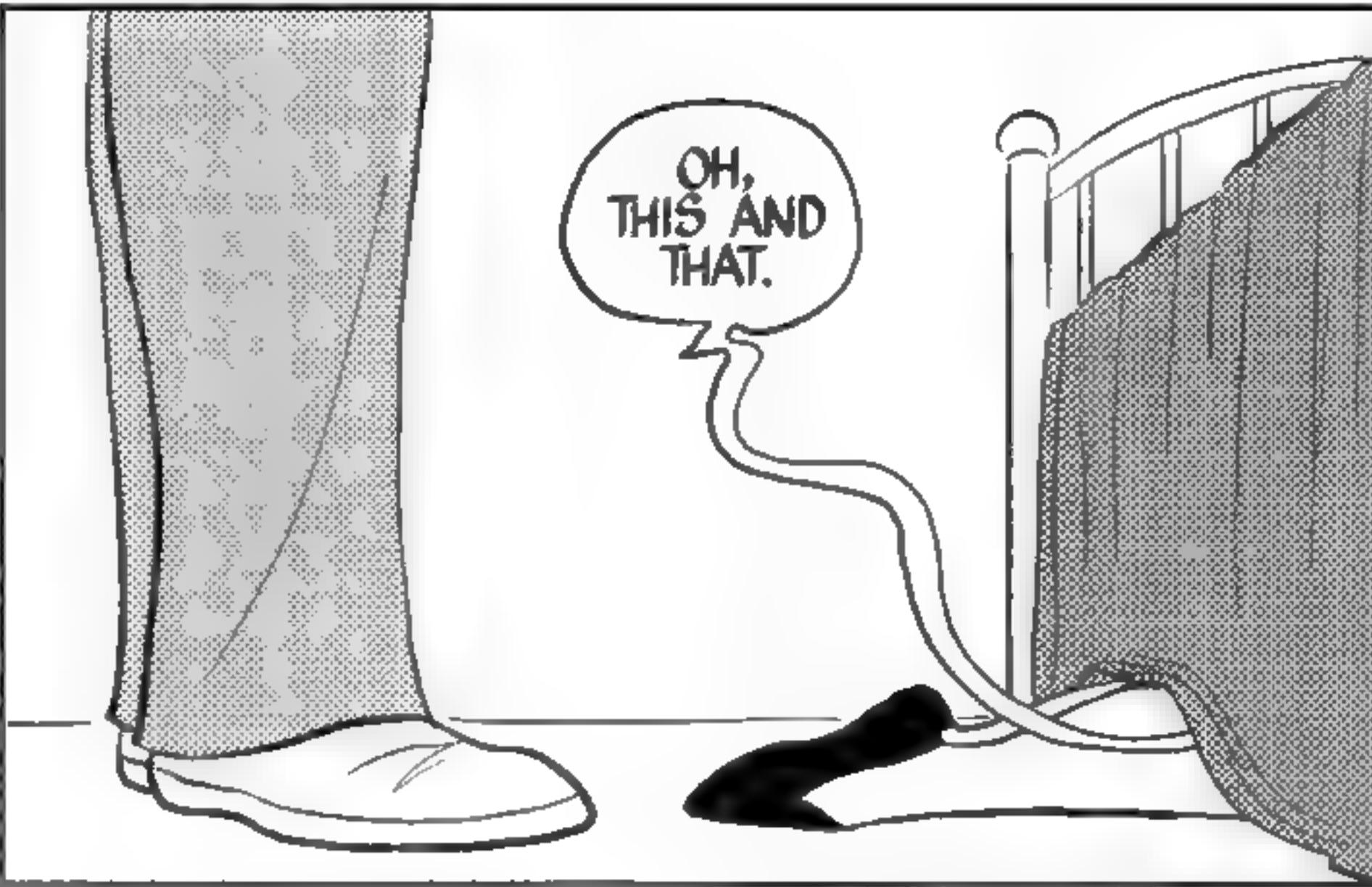
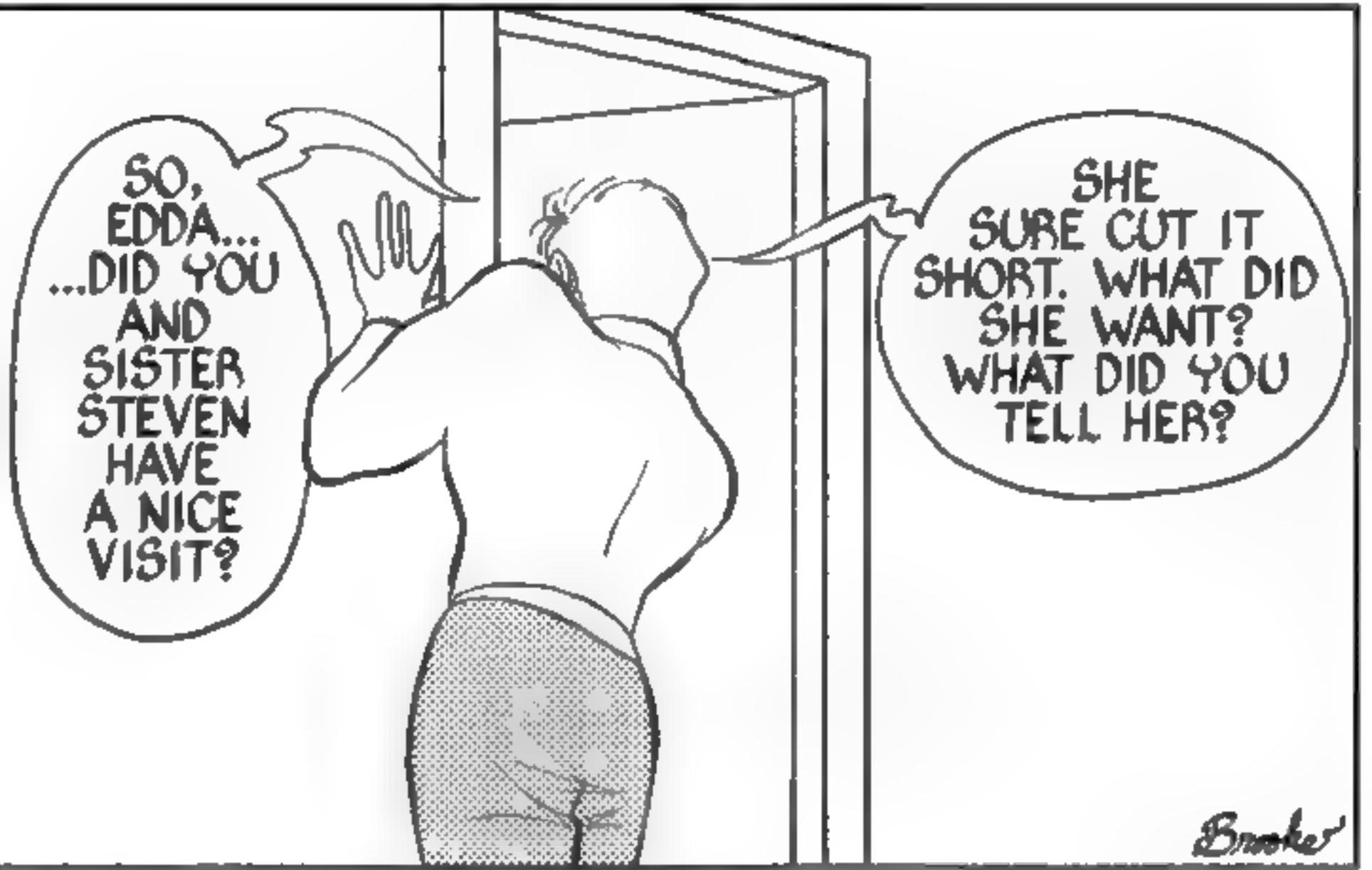


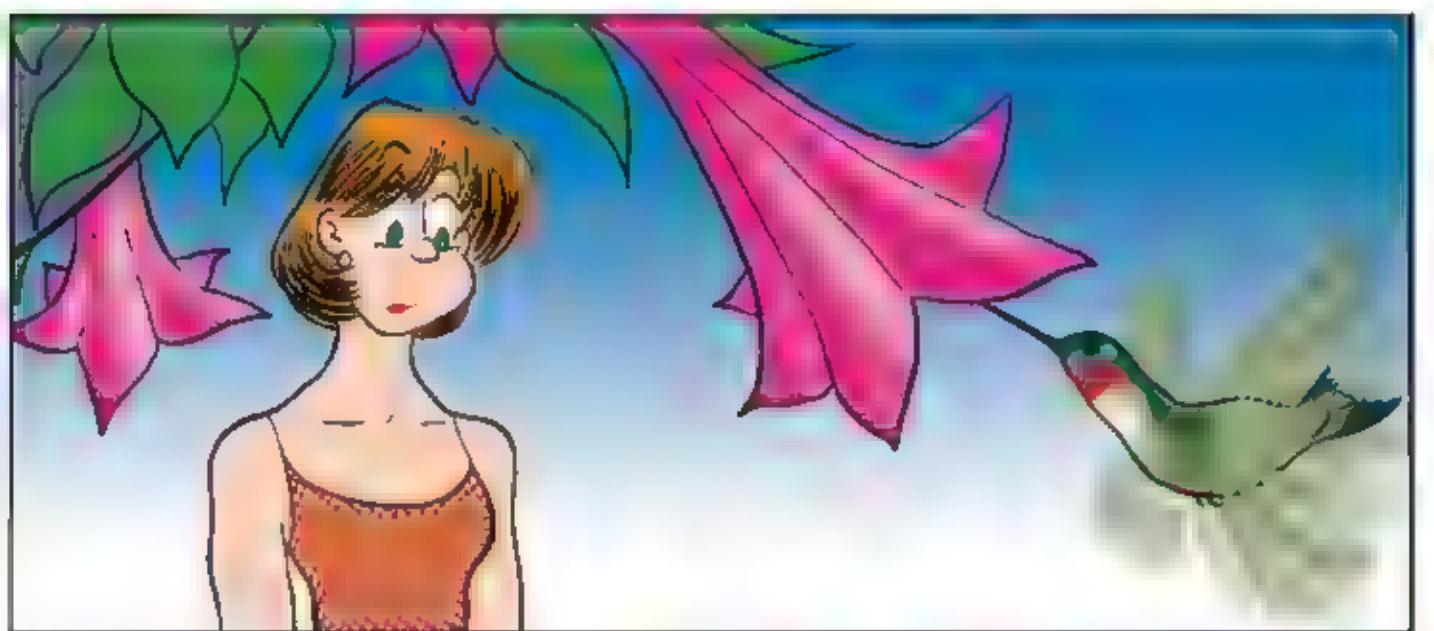
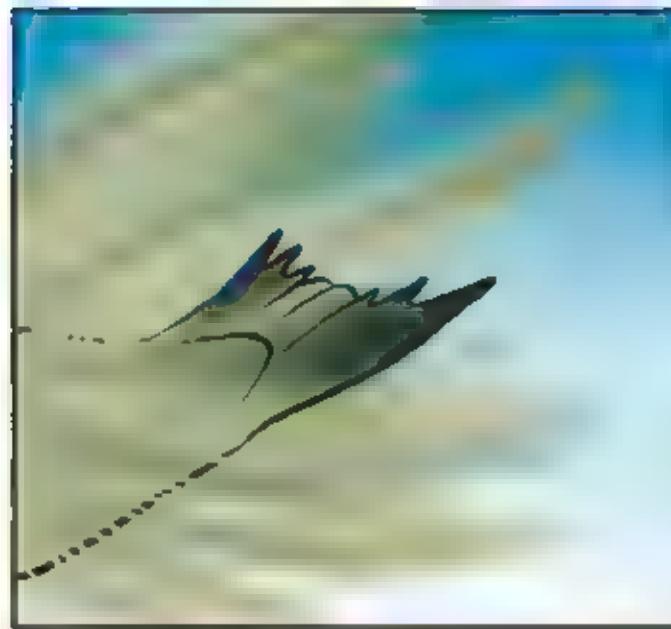
THIS ISN'T AN EXTRA FROM
"THE SOUND OF MUSIC."
THIS IS MY OLD
HEADMISTRESS.
SHE HAS SAW
TEETH AND
DEVOURS
BROKEN
GLASS
BY
THE
MOON-
LIGHT.



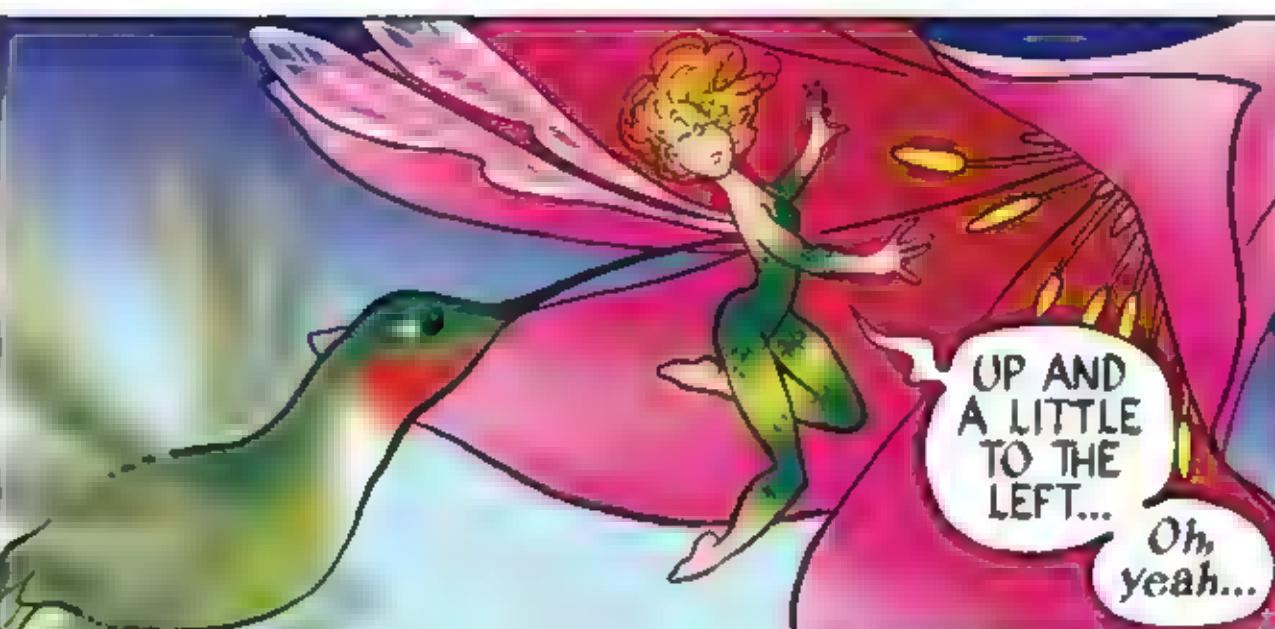


Brooke





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EDDA WAS A LITTLE
DAUNTED AT THE PROSPECT
OF TALKING WITH HER OLD
HEADMISTRESS, BUT IN THE
END SHE KNEW JUST HOW
TO HANDLE THE
OLD LADY.



7-24 © 1994 M. E. Downey Dist by UFS Inc







THE THING IS, I'VE GROWN BEYOND A PERCEPTION OF REALITY THROUGH CONVENTIONAL DOGMA. MY PERSONALITY IS TOO COMPLEX.



YOU ESPOUSE A SOPHOMORIC BLEND OF SCHOPENHAUER AND KANT, ALL WRAPPED UP IN KIERKEGAARD, AND EFFUSING A LITTLE WISP OF SARTRE.



YOU'RE NOWHERE NEAR THE MARK.



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Brooke

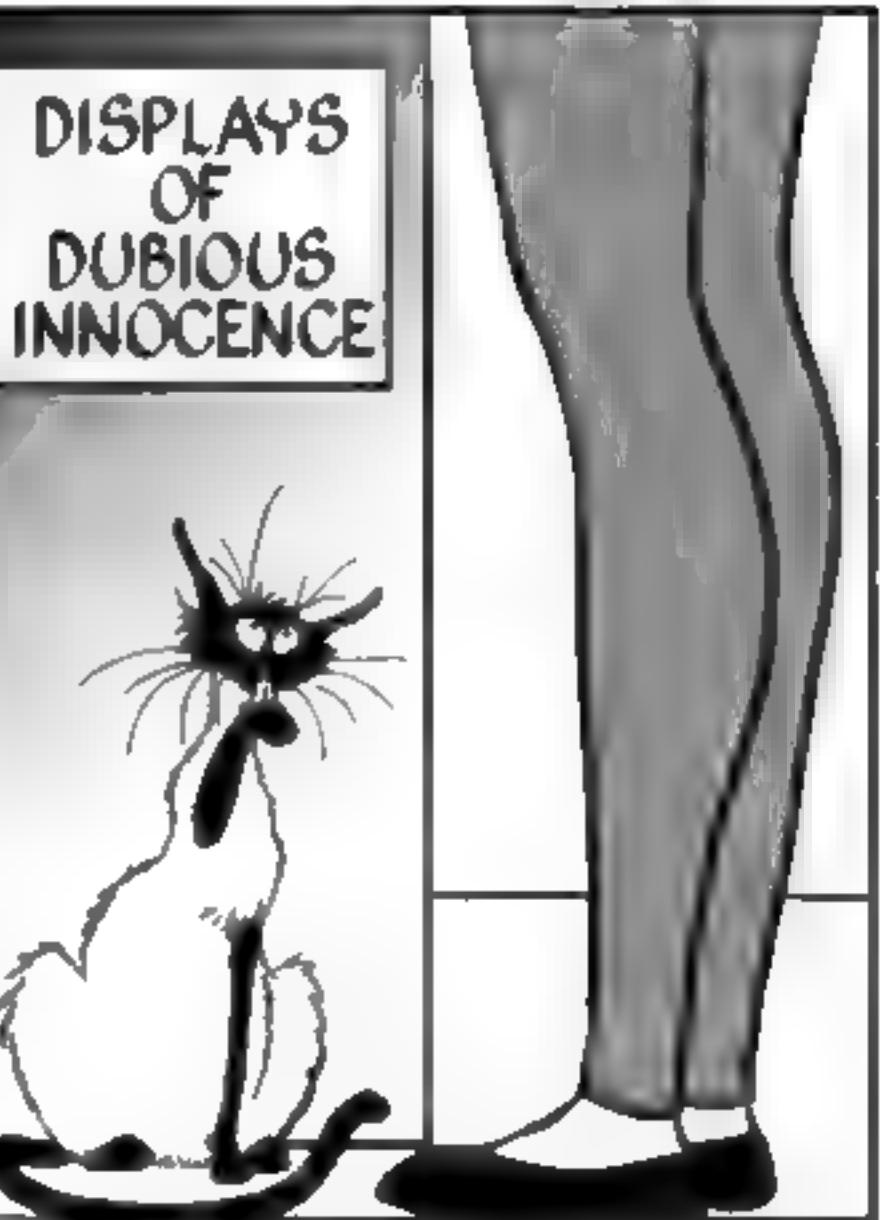
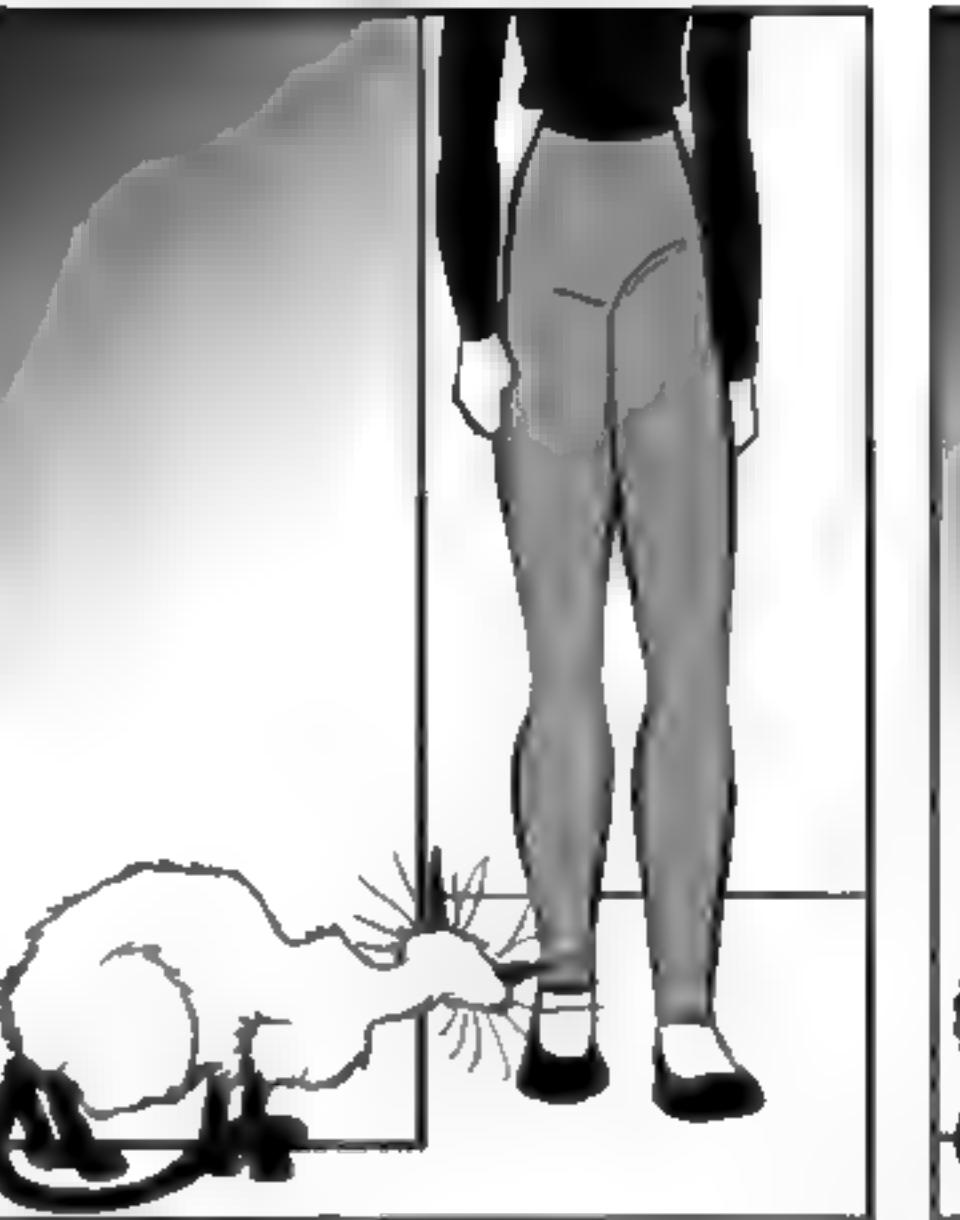
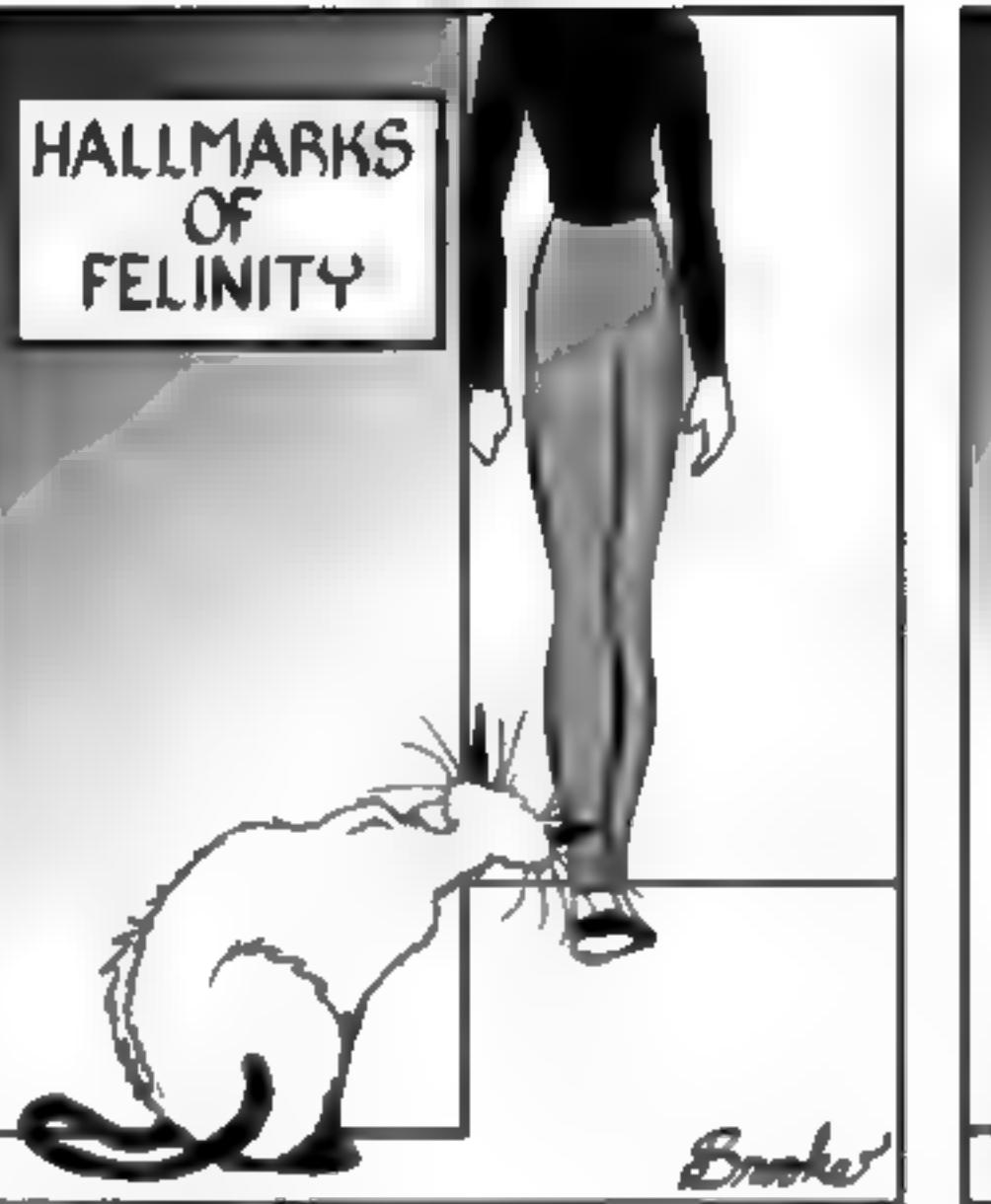
MAN! SOMEBODY GET THIS WOMAN OUT OF MY HEAD!

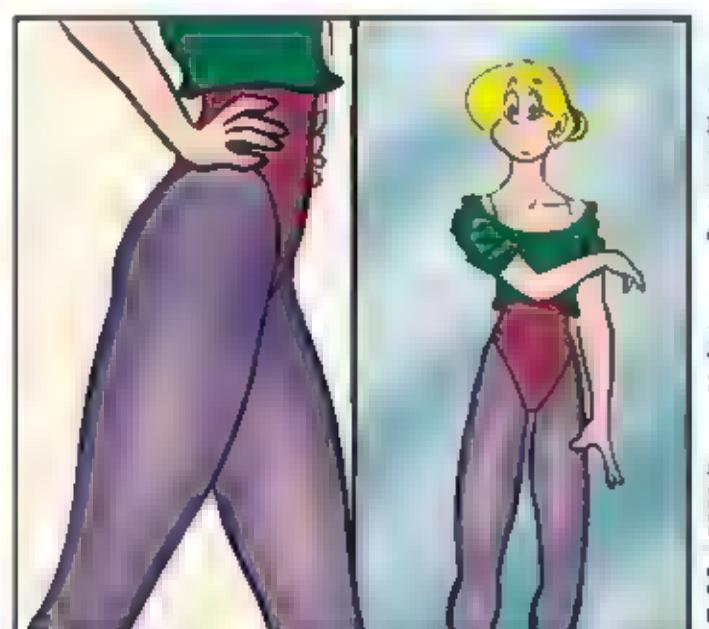
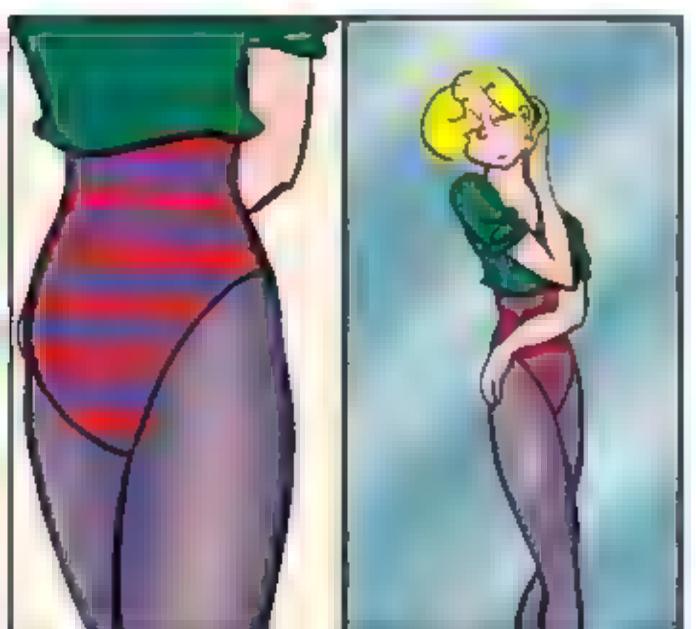
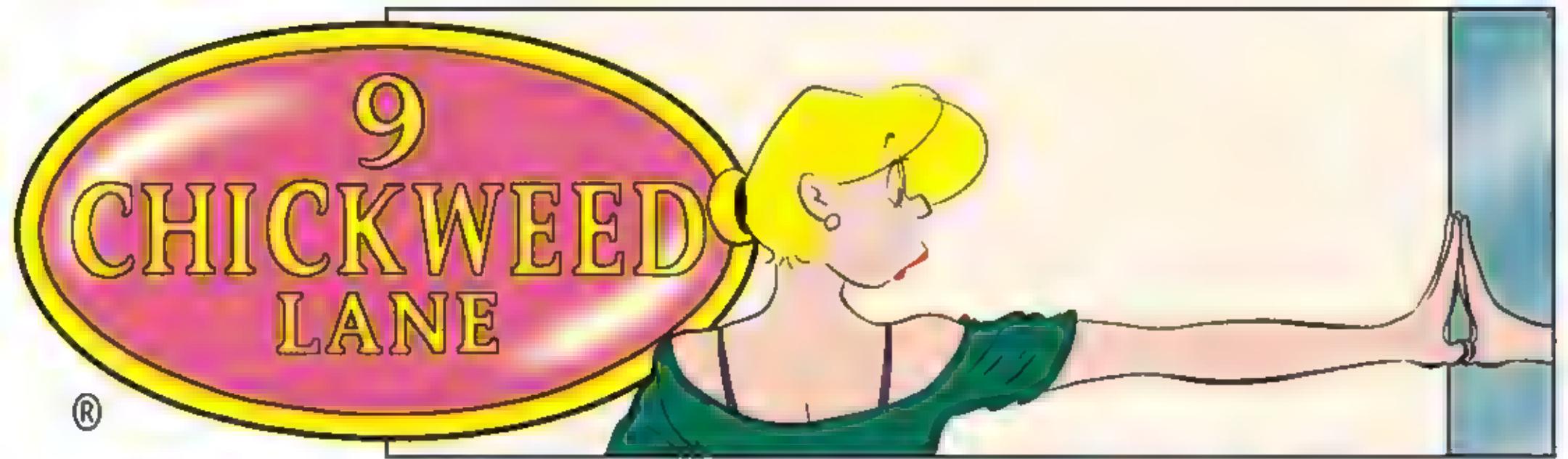
I CAN'T TALK TO THAT WOMAN ANYMORE. SHE'S LIKE YOUR MOTHER, BUT WITH LASER CANNON. FURTHER EXPOSURE AND I'LL COMPLETELY LOSE MY HARD-WON INGENUE LOOKS.



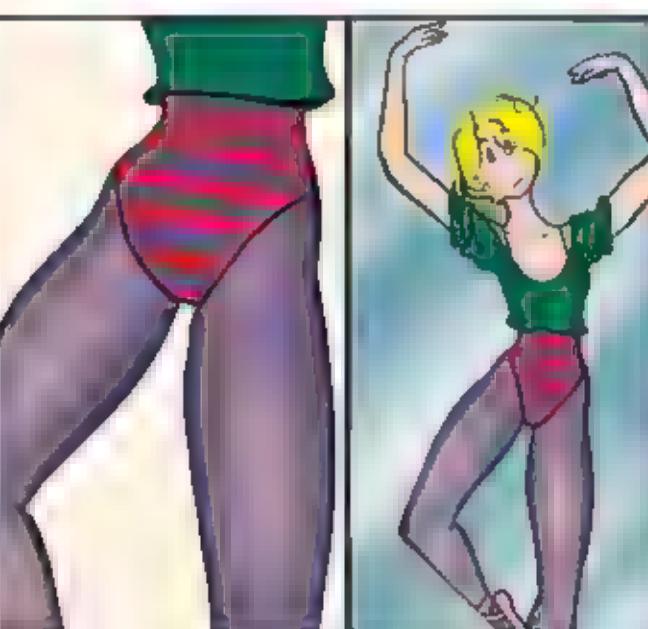
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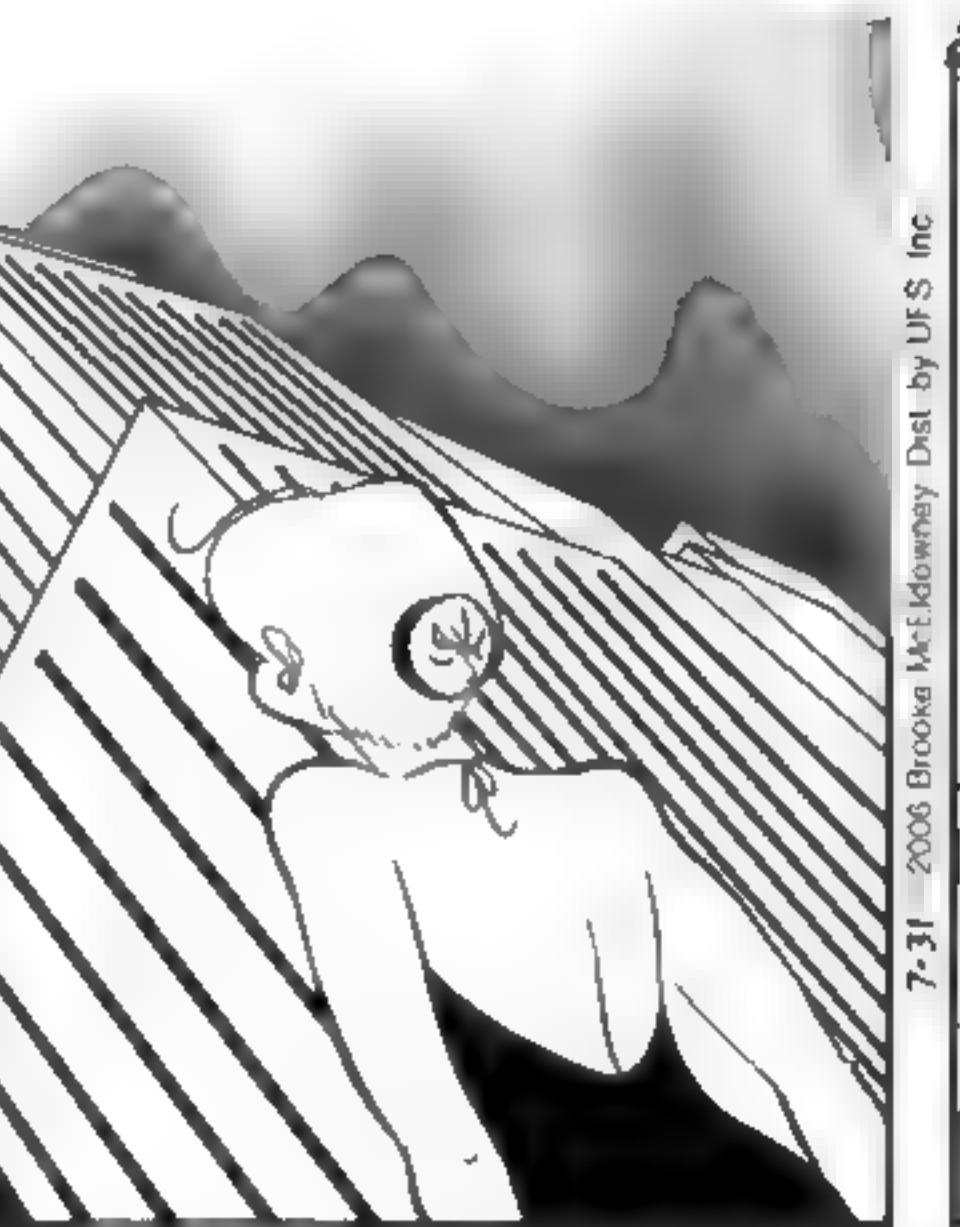
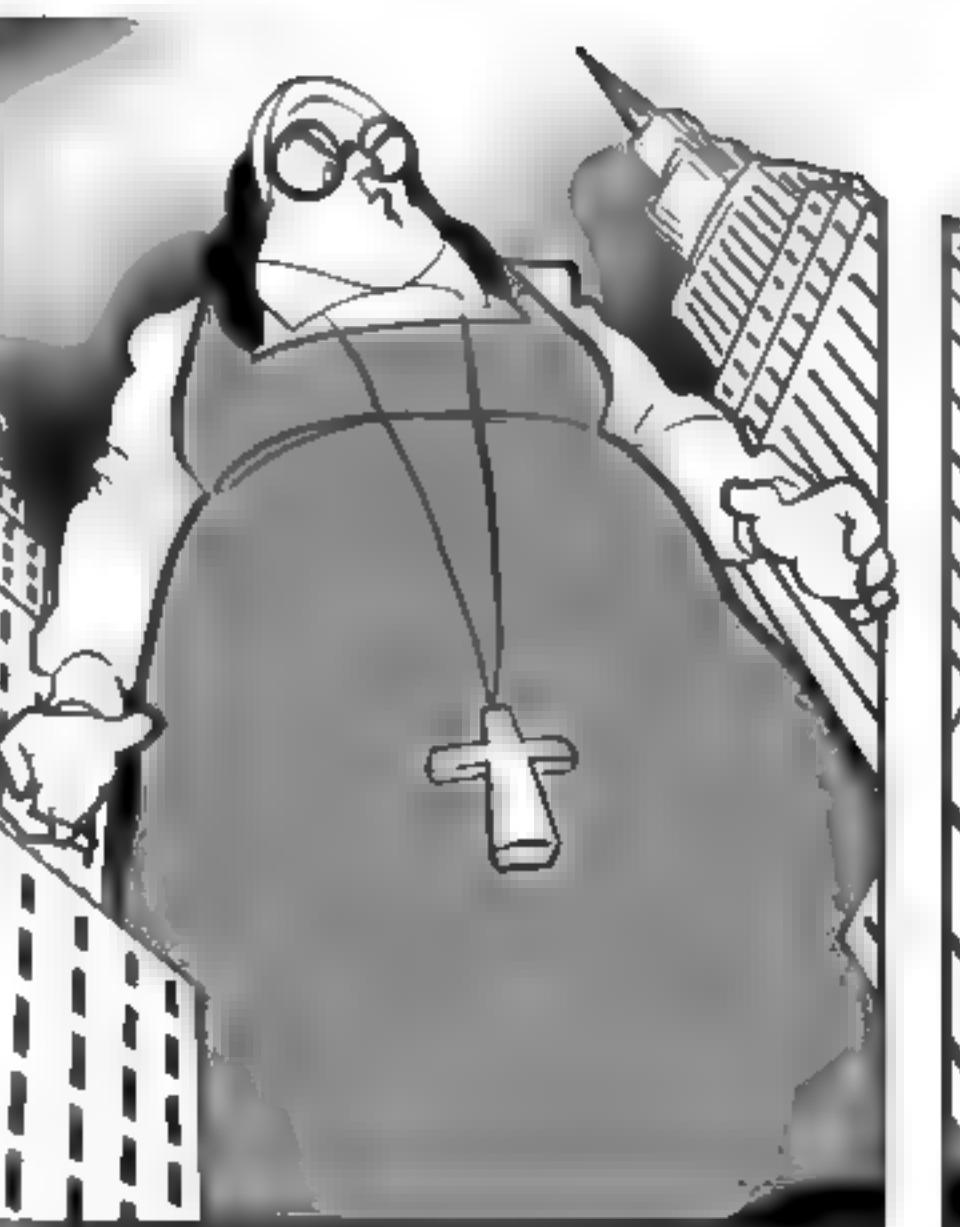


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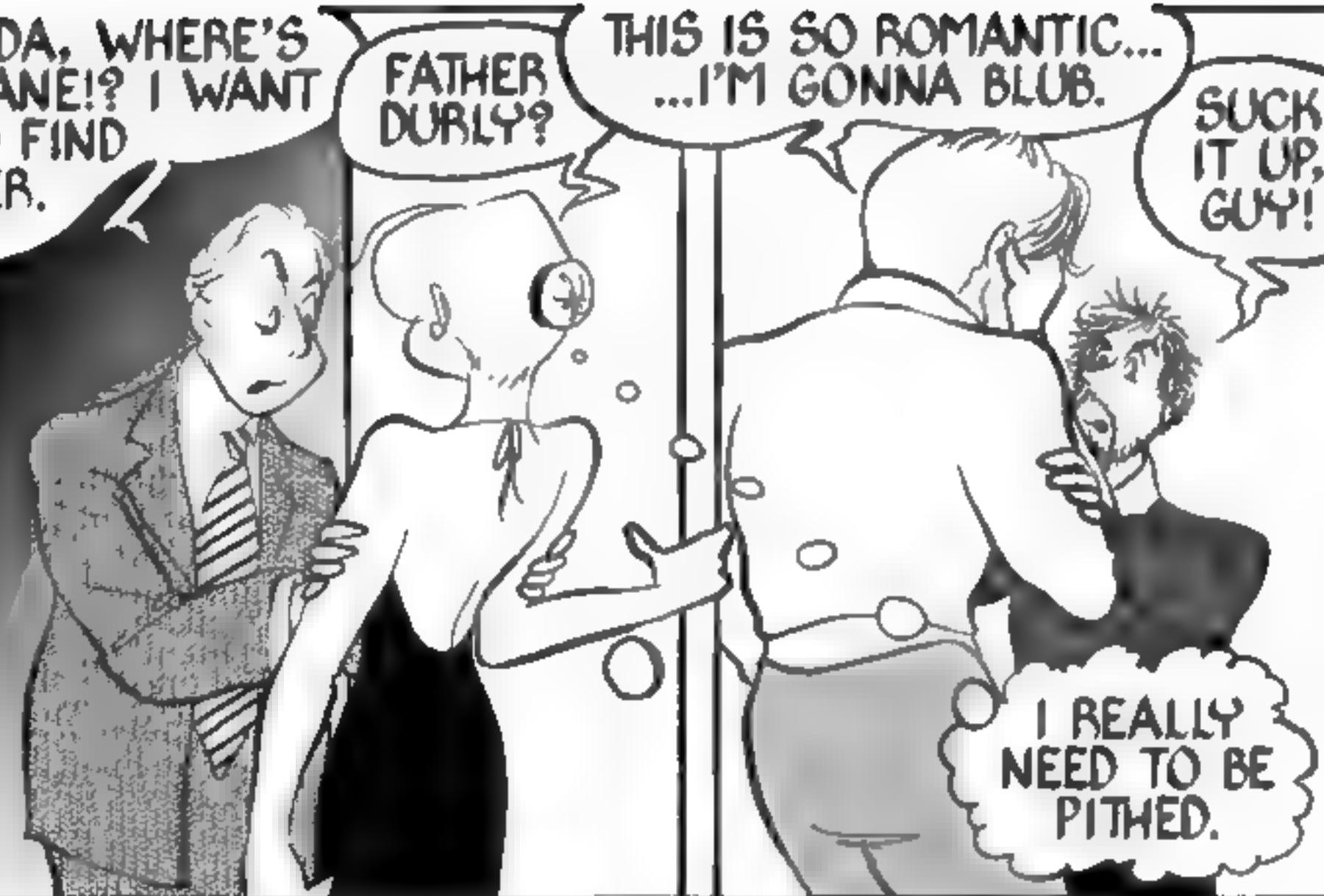
I WANT YOU TO TELL ME
WHERE I CAN FIND SISTER
ARAMUS.

WELL,
YOU SEE,
THE PROBLEM
IS...



THIS WHOLE THING STARTED
WHEN I ANSWERED THE DOOR.
IF I HADN'T ANSWERED THE
DOOR, I WOULDN'T BE
STANDING HERE SAYING
THIS ALL STARTED
WHEN I ANSWERED
THE DOOR. WHY
DID I ANSWER THE
DOOR?

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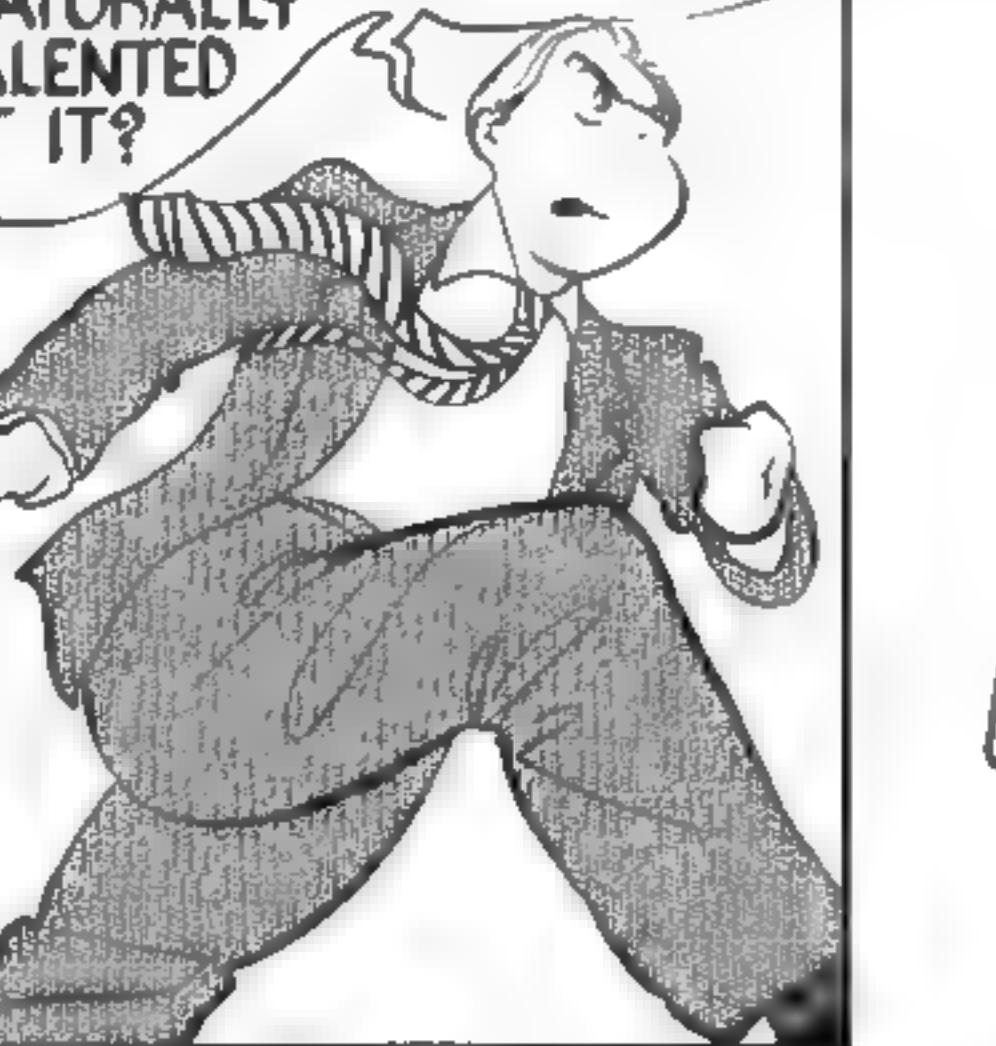


SISTER STEVEN CAME BY
ASKING AFTER DIANE, AND
I TOLD HER WHERE SHE'D
FIND HER IN CENTRAL PARK.
I DIDN'T KNOW...I DIDN'T
MEAN TO...I DIDN'T THINK IT
WOULD...



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DID YOU STUDY MEDDLING,
EDDA, OR ARE YOU JUST
NATURALLY
TALENTED
AT IT?



Brooke



DOES SHE
NEARLY ALL THE
TIME...CHABLIS?
DO THIS
A LOT?



What
have I
done?



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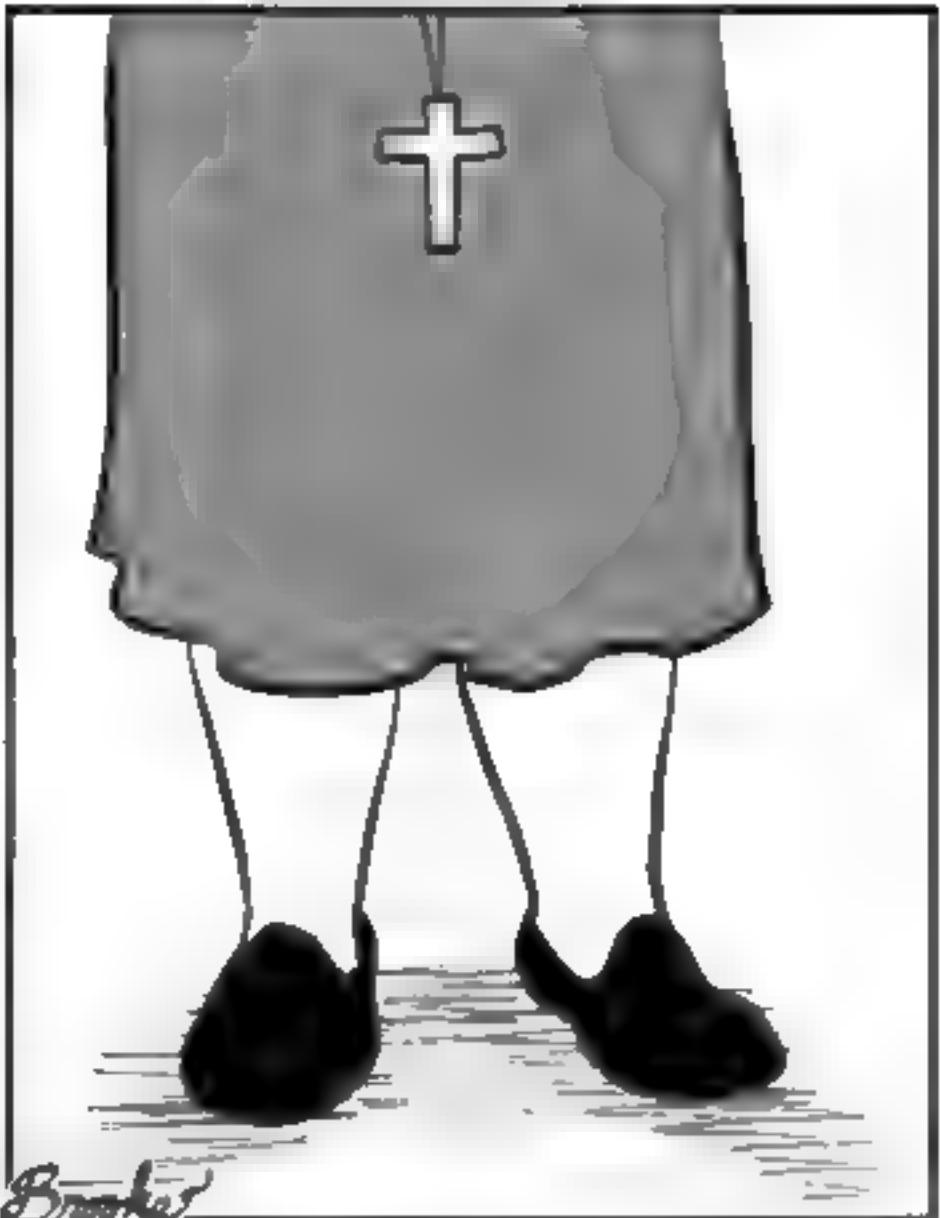


WITH FEWER THAN 71 HOURS REMAINING, WHAT, OF ALL THINGS, IN ALL THE WORLD, DO WE SEEK OUT?

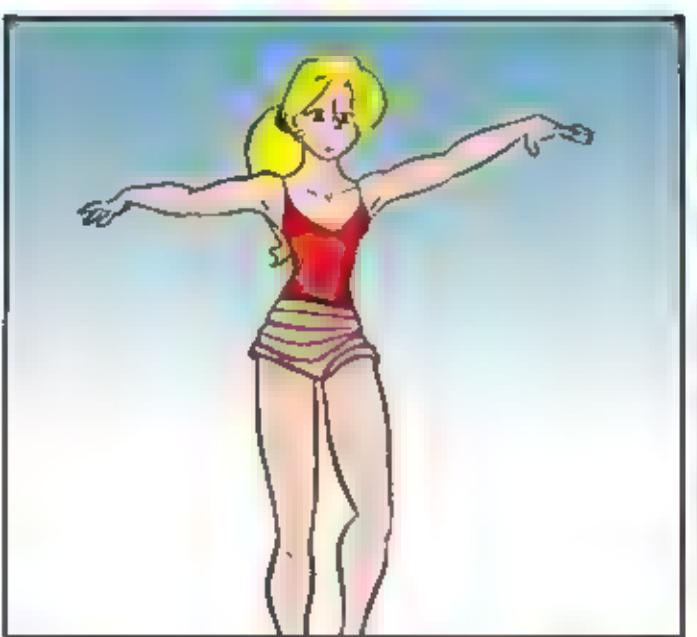
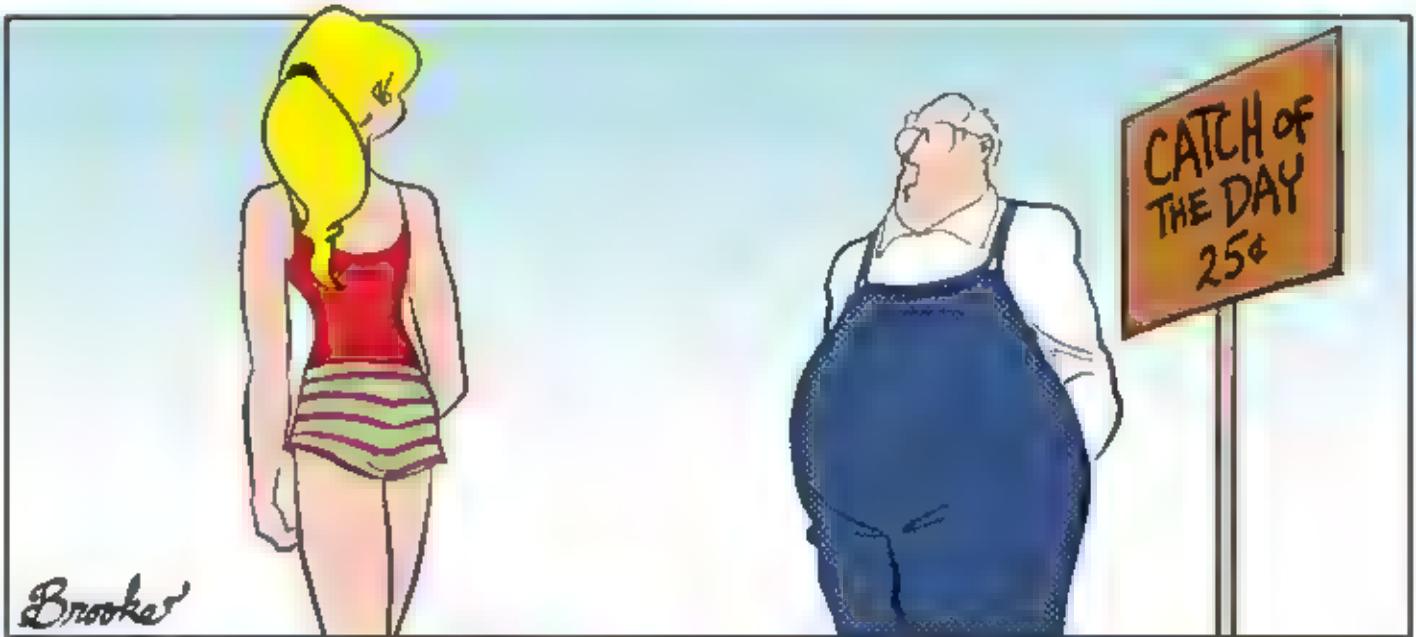
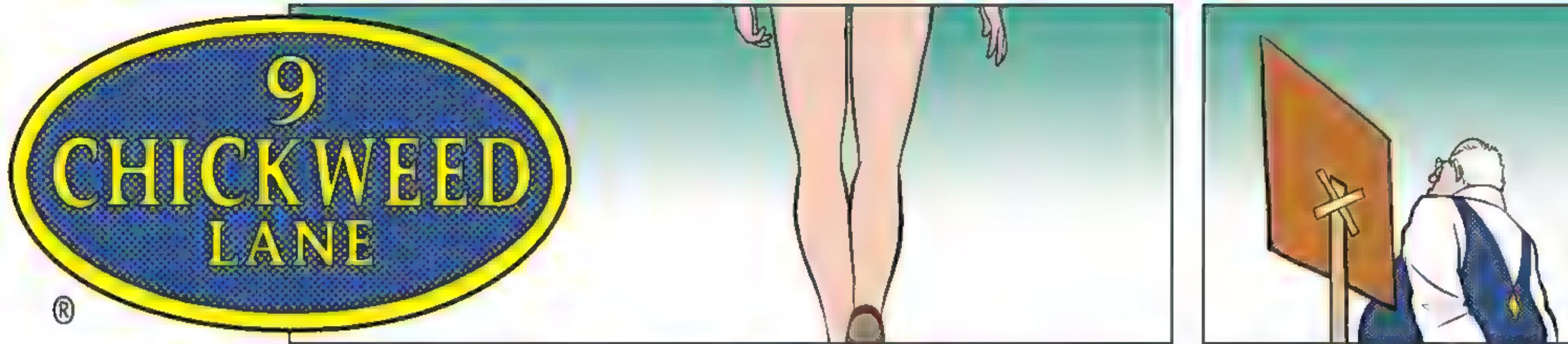




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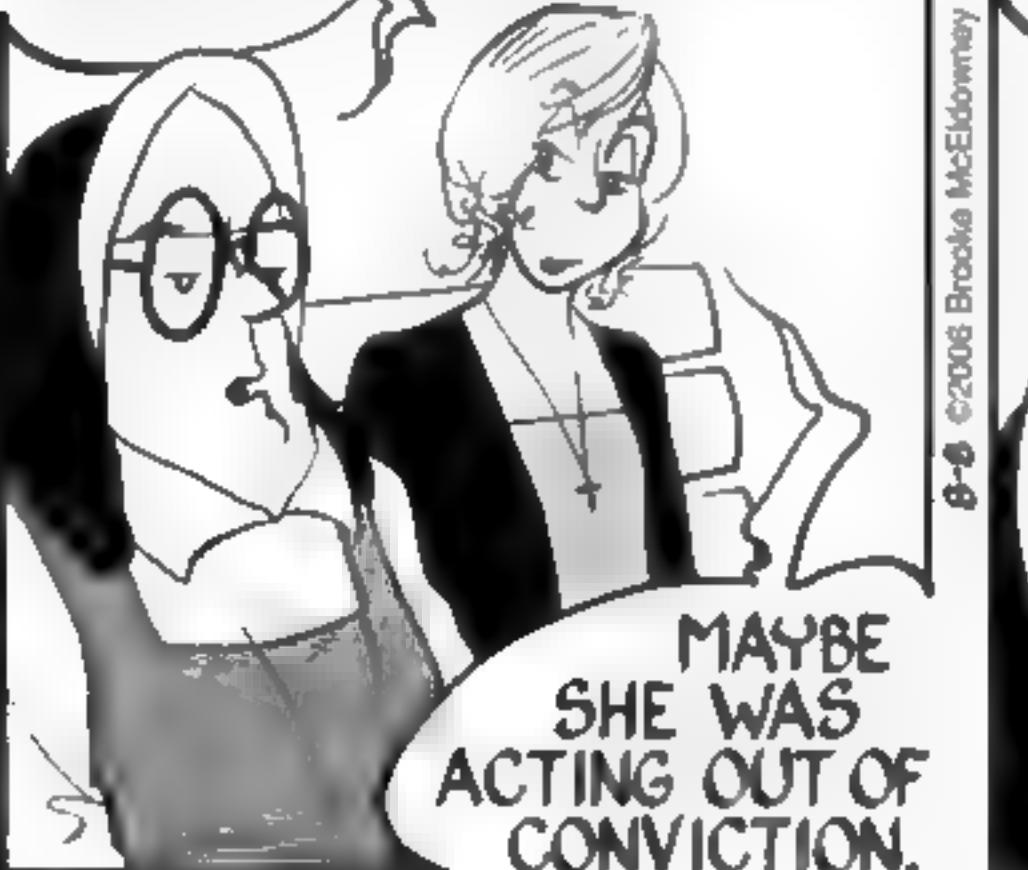


Brooke





I'M AFRAID I BEHAVED
RATHER SEVERELY WITH
SISTER ARAMUS. I SAID
HER DECISION WAS
FOOLISH.



I NEVER FEEL THAT
FOOLISHNESS SWADDLED
IN CONVICTION IS ANY
LESS FOOLISH...
ONLY MORE PERNICIOUS.



MAYBE
SHE WAS
ACTING OUT OF
CONVICTION.

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SOUNDS
AS IF
YOU TWO
HAD A WARM
FAREWELL.



I MAY HAVE
NEGLECTED
TO SAY
GOODBYE.

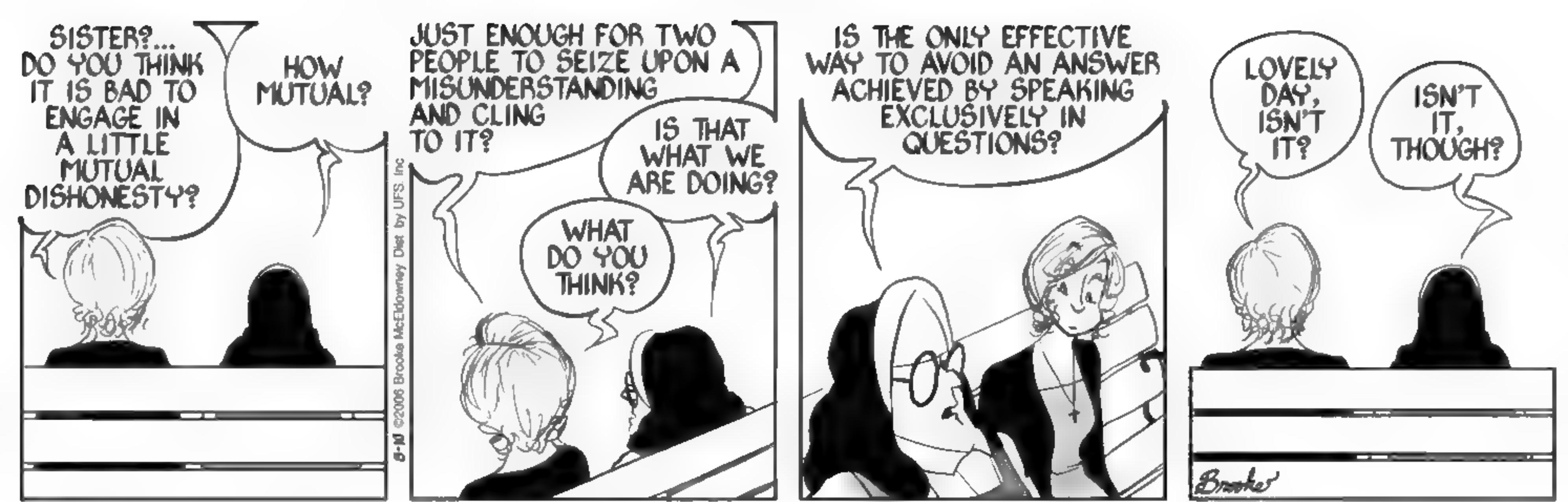
Brooke

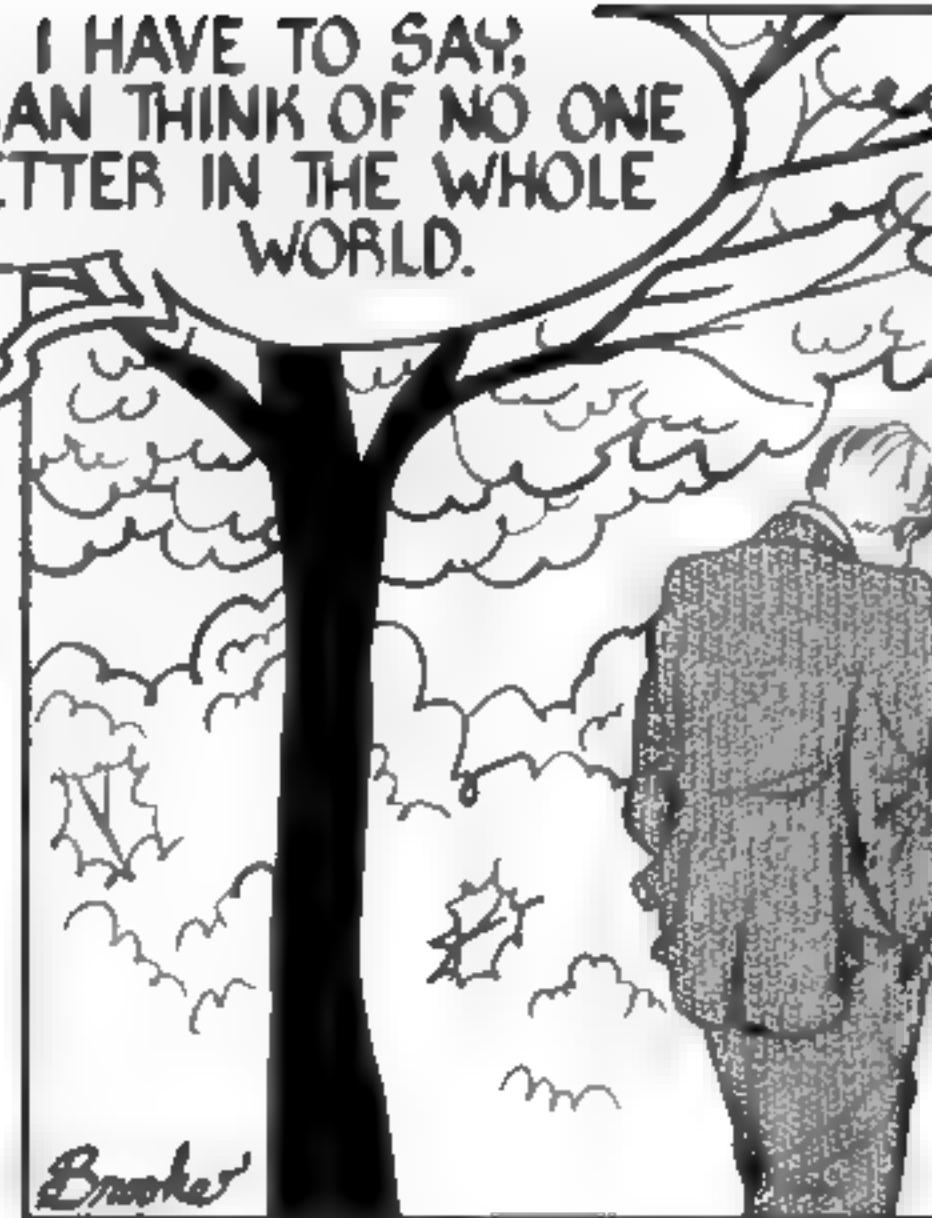
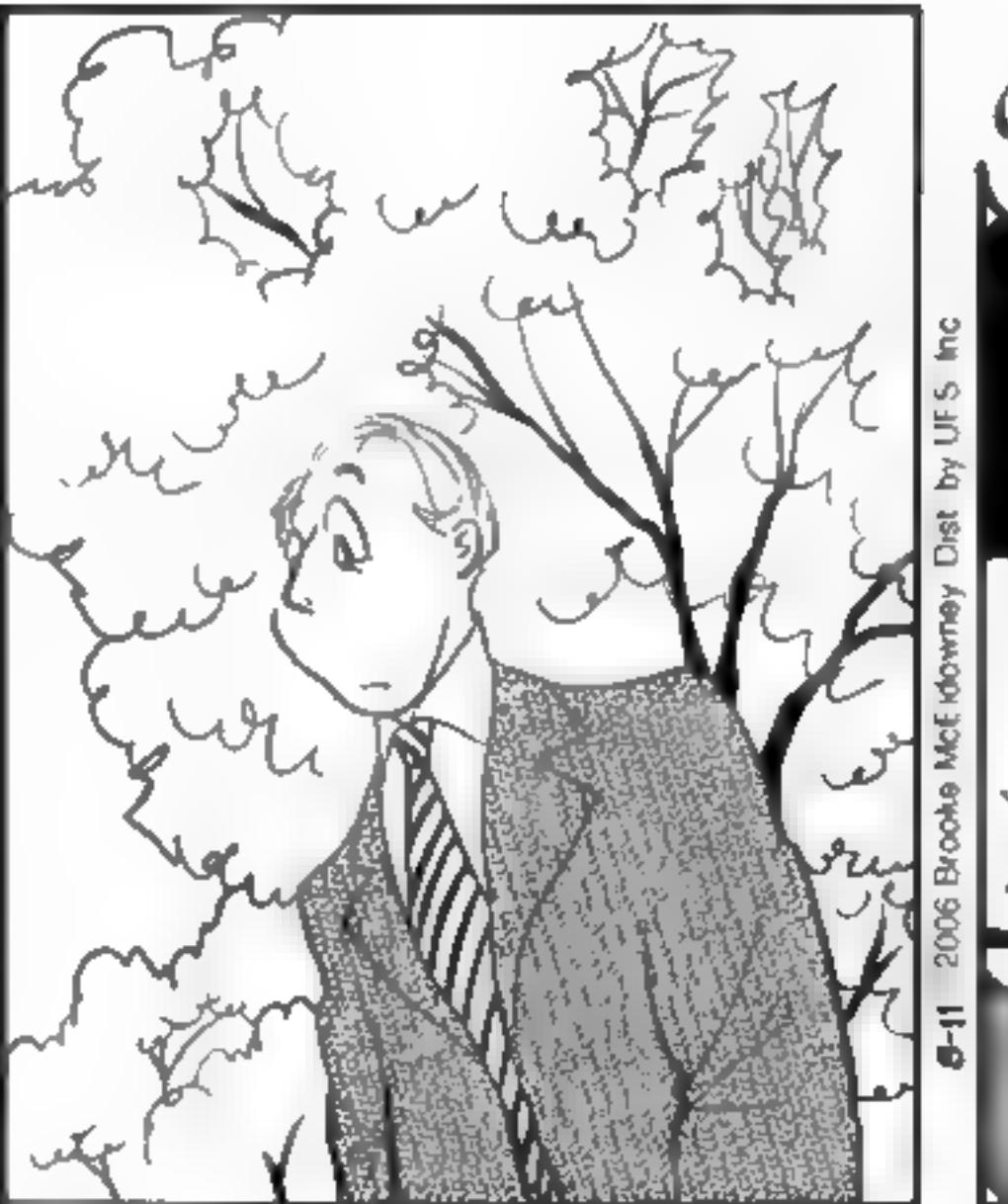
WHAT DID YOU WANT
TO SAY TO SISTER
ARAMUS? MAYBE
I CAN PASS ON
THE MESSAGE.

I WANTED
TO SAY
I'M SORRY
WE PARTED
AS WE
DID.

THAT I MISS
HER AND
WORRY
ABOUT HER.
THERE ARE
A LOT OF
THINGS I'D
LIKE TO SAY
THAT ARE
HARD
TO
SAY
FACE
TO
FACE.







MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX:
THEOLOGICAL
PASTIMES –
GUILT

Brooks



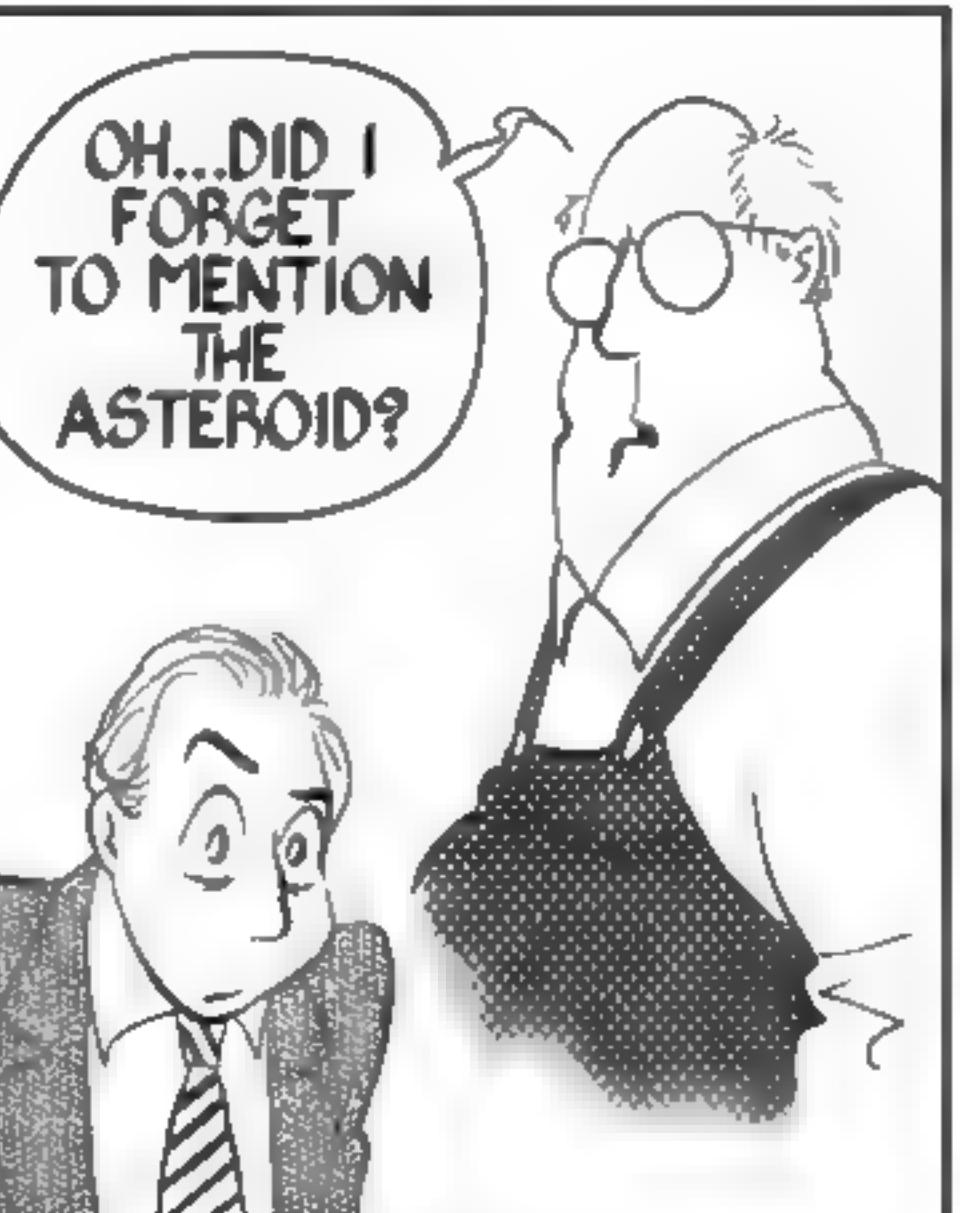
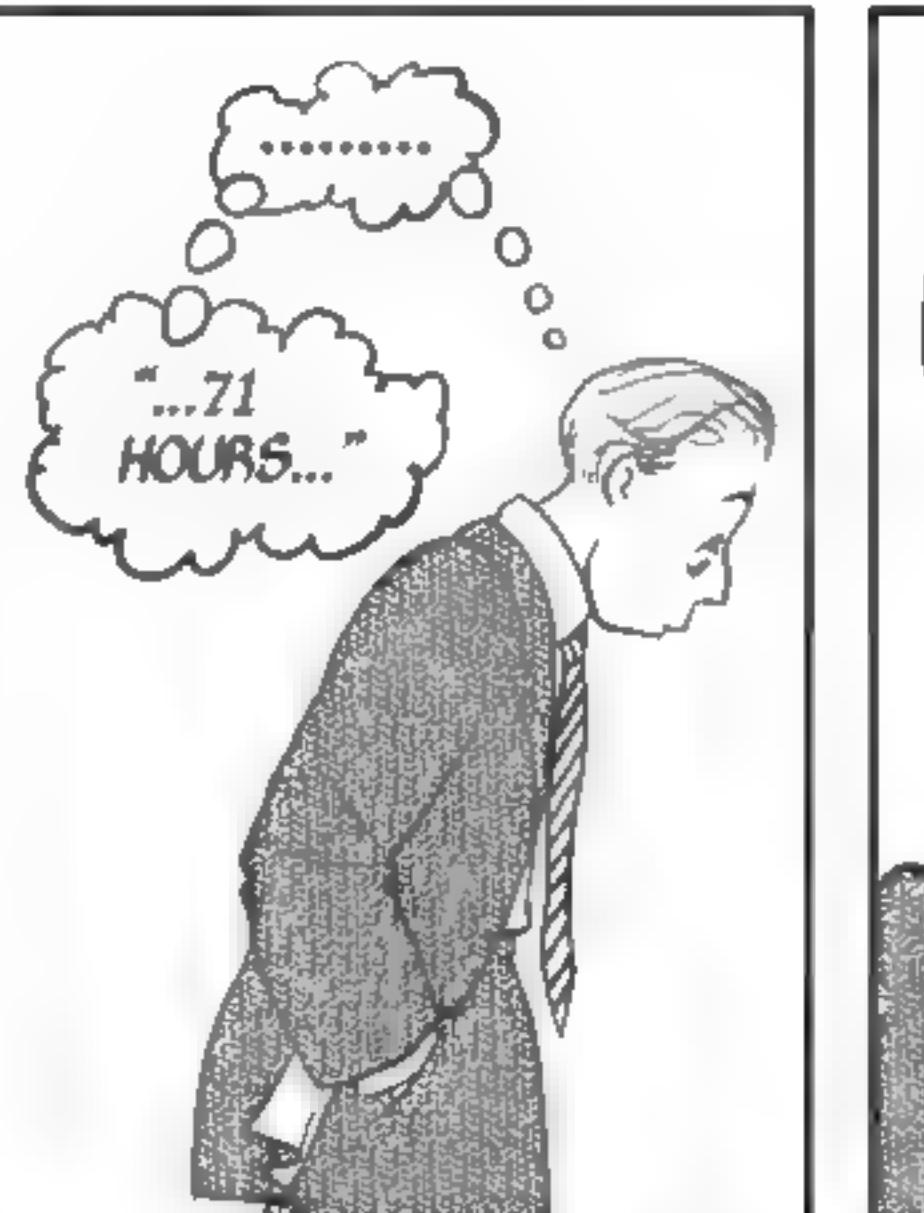
GUILT IS
THE TRAGIC
DELUSION OF
CULPABILITY
WITHOUT THE
COMIC RELIEF
OF SIN.

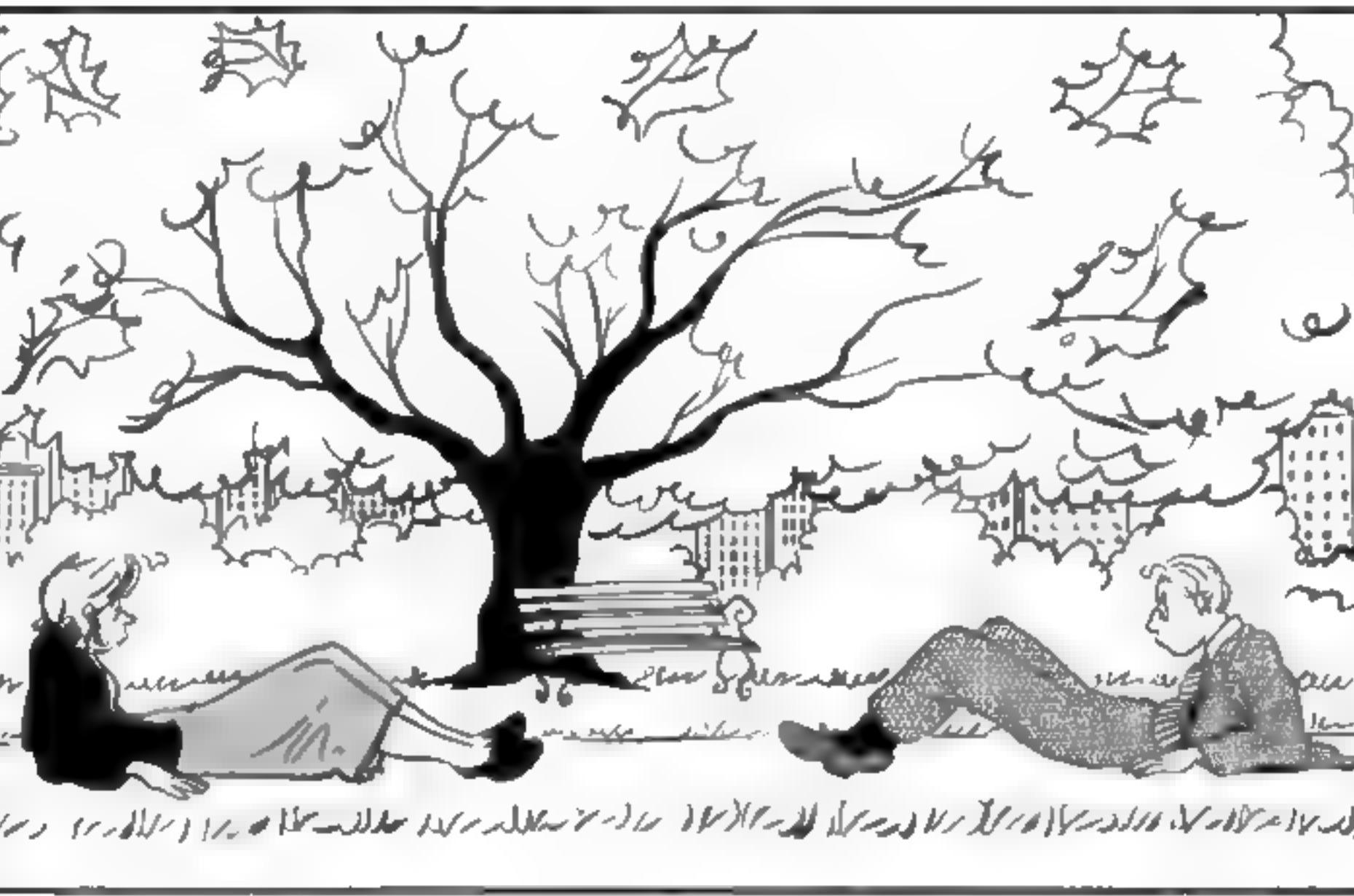
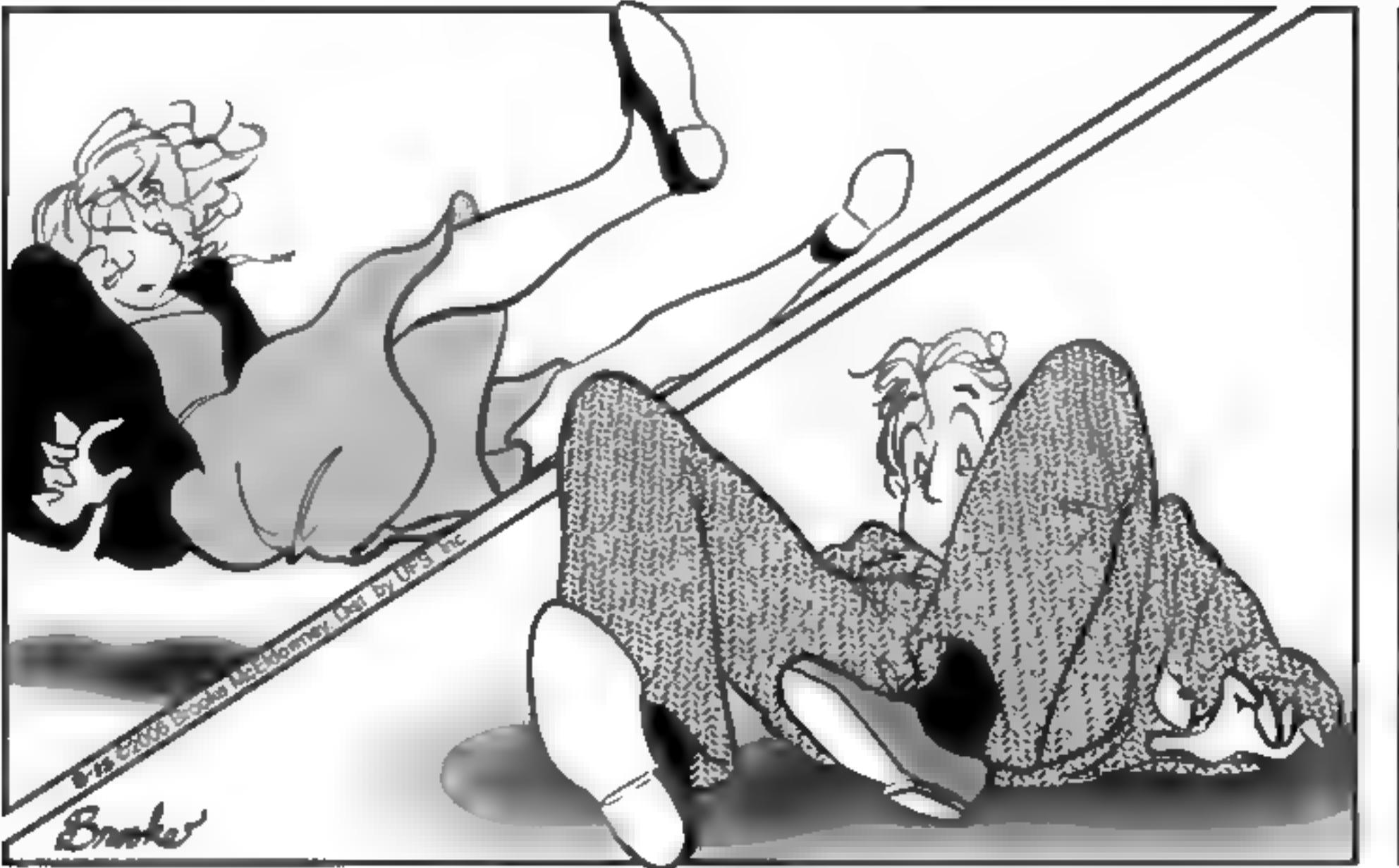


WELL... AT BEST POMPOUS. OUR MESSAGE SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN TO THE COSMIC HEART, THE INTERPLANETARY SOUL. FOR INSTANCE...

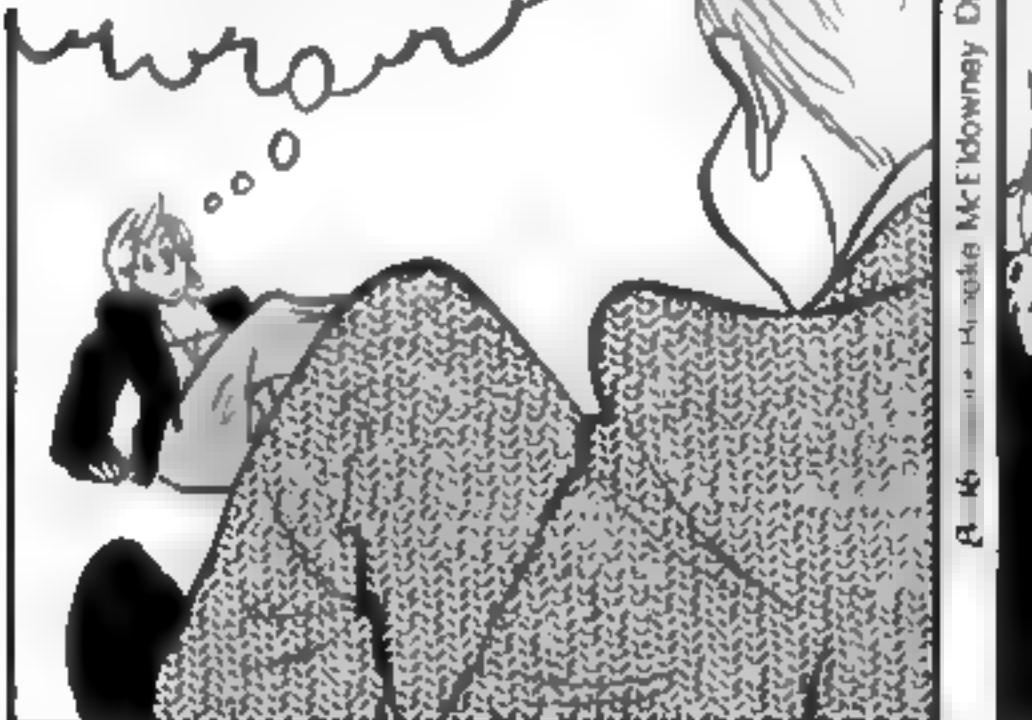
...“SENTIENT ENTITY LOOKING FOR COMPANIONSHIP. ENJOYS LONG WALKS ON THE BEACH, DINING BY CANDLELIGHT, CLASSIC MOVIES, MUSIC. RESPOND IN BINARY CODE TO...”



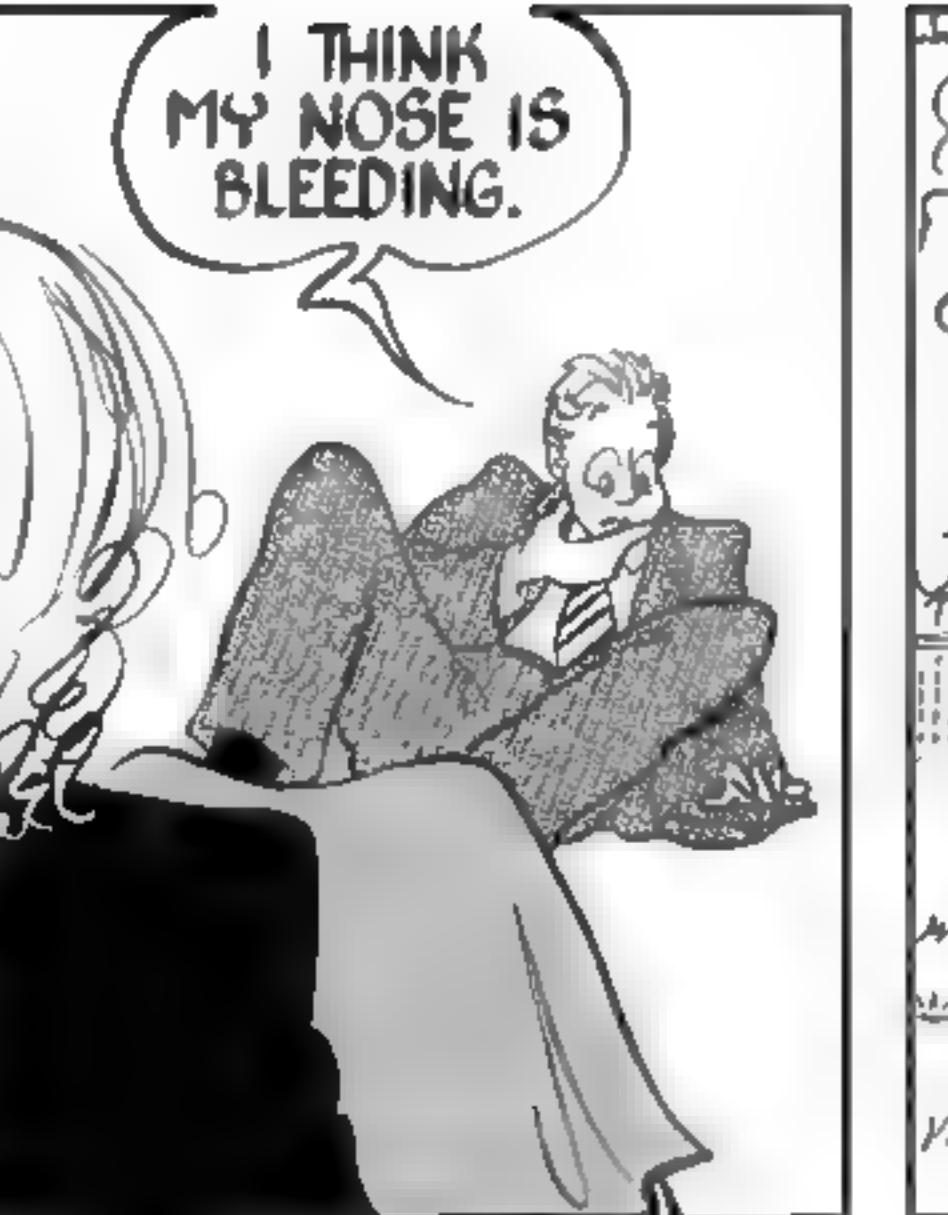




WE'VE GOT TO SAY SOMETHING! WE CAN'T JUST LIE HERE STARING AT EACH OTHER. PLEASE SAY SOMETHING! I CAN'T THINK OF EVEN A SYLLABLE!

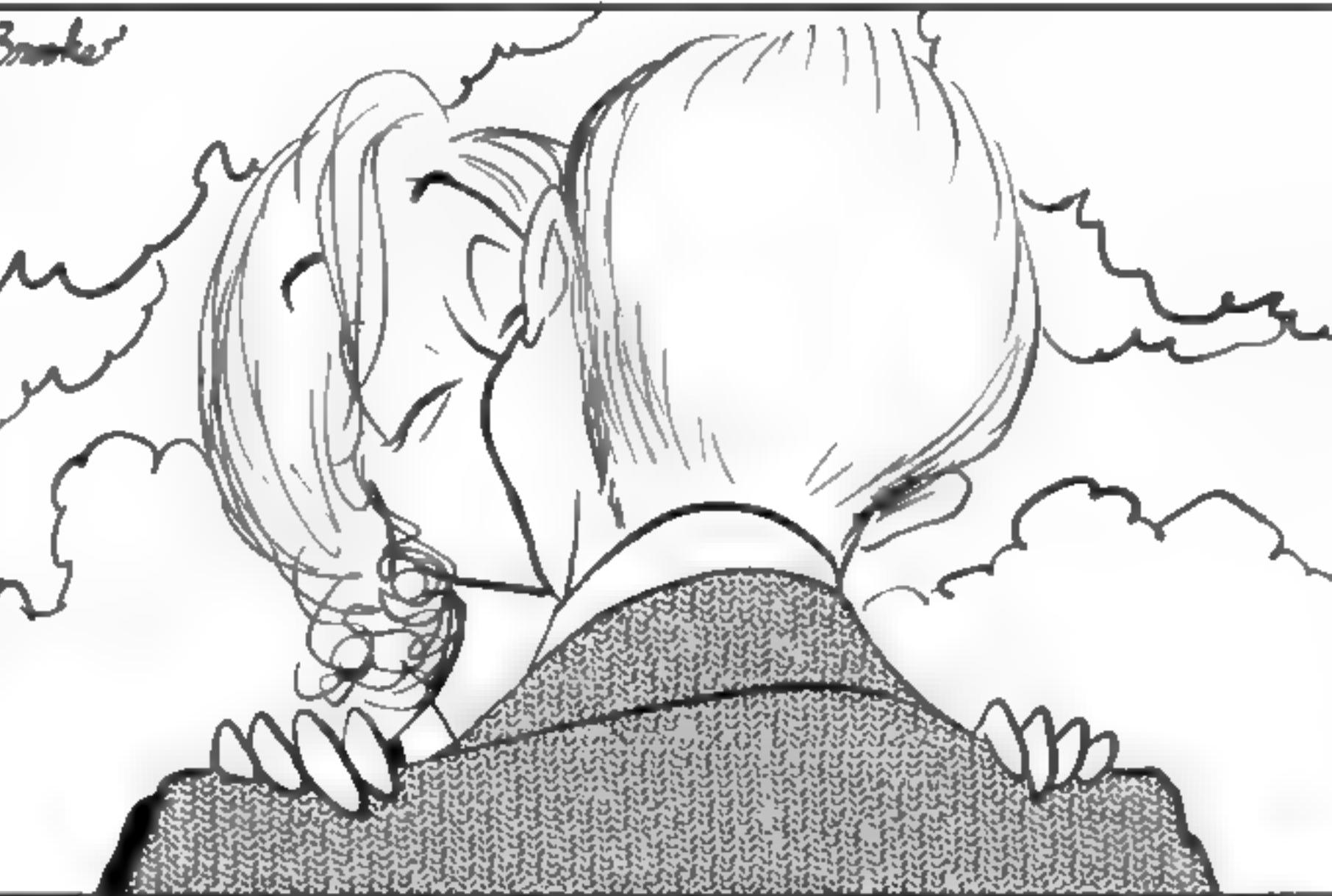


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Brokers

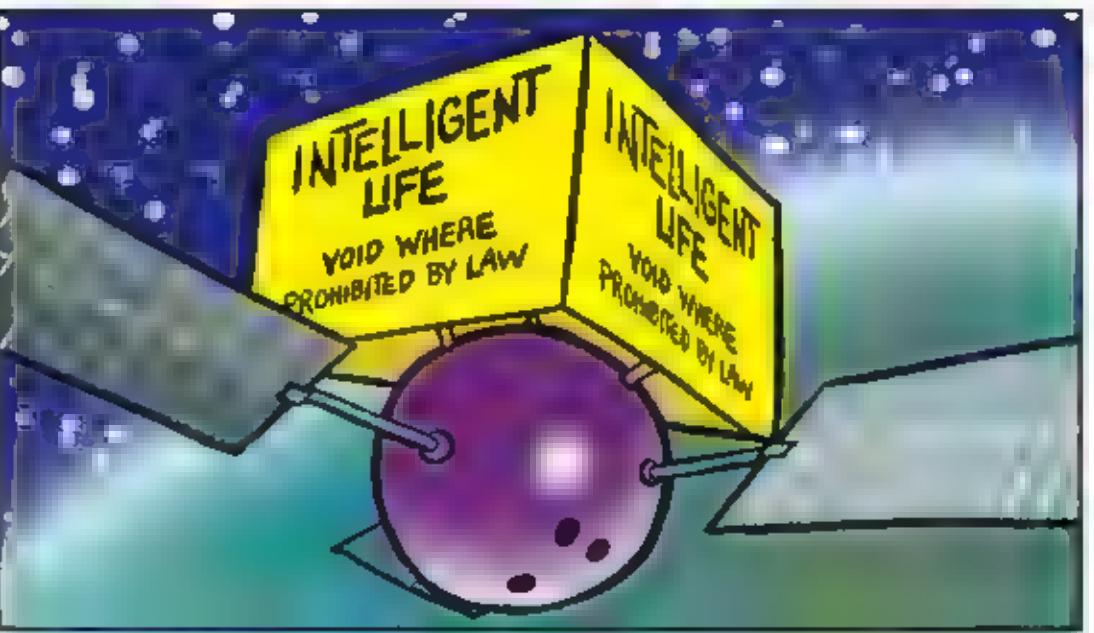
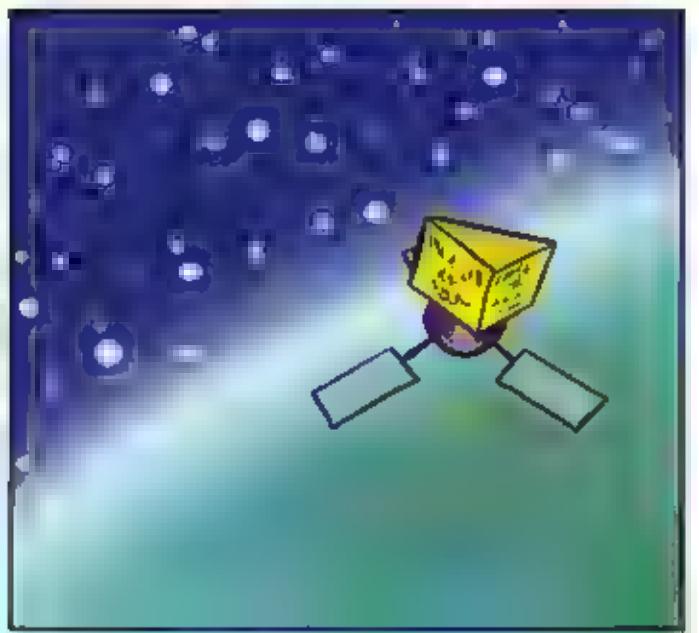
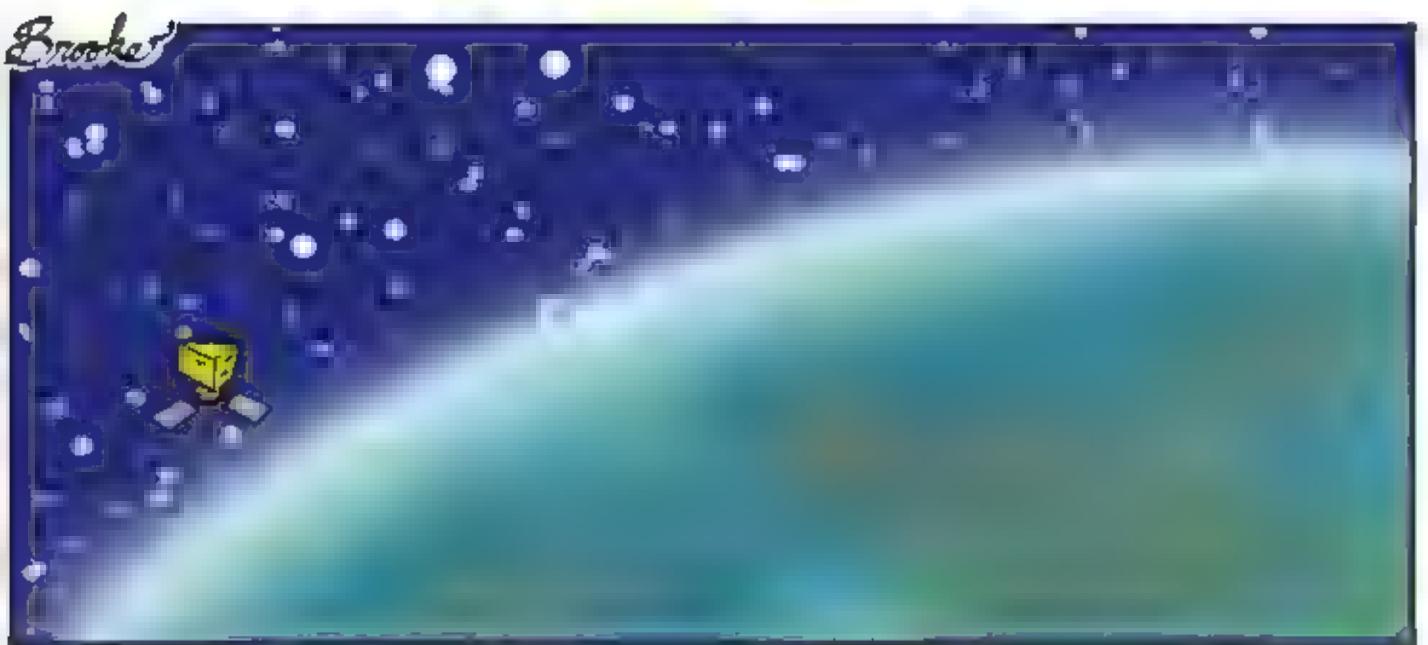


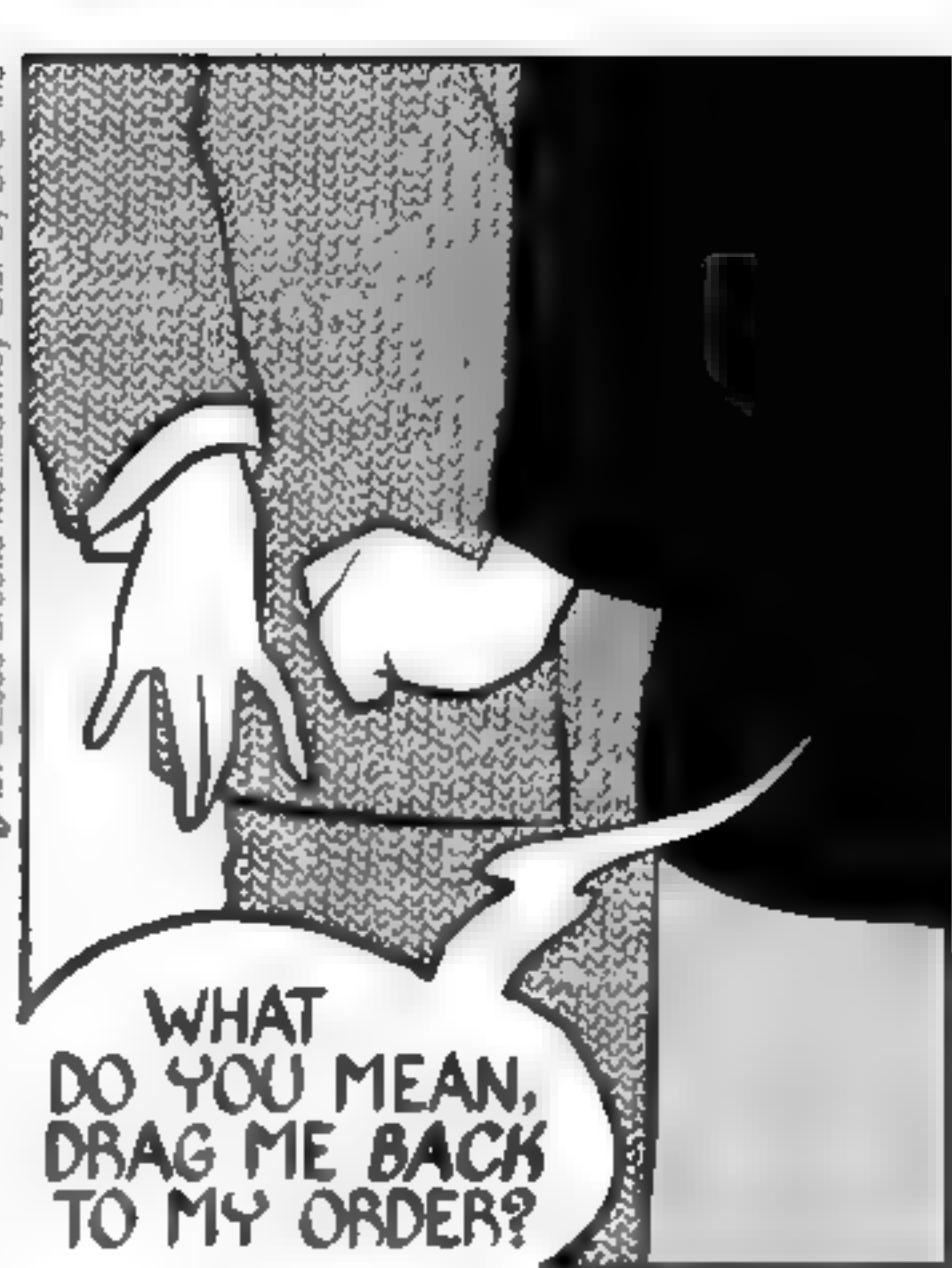




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BUT THAT
WAS AN
ACCIDENT!
IT JUST
HAPPENED!



LEADING
ME ON FOR
MONTHS,
TELLING ME
YOU WERE
SISTER
ARAMUS'
NIECE...
...THAT "JUST
HAPPENED"?

YOUR HAIR GREW
FOUR INCHES
WHILE THAT
“JUST
HAPPENED.”



WELL, IF
YOU KNEW,
WHY DID YOU
COME BACK
AT ALL?

BECAUSE I REALIZED THAT I
LOVE YOU WHOEVER YOU ARE
AND THAT IF I HAD ONLY 71
HOURS REMAINING I'D WANT
TO BE WITH YOU AND TELL YOU
HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU WHICH
IS TO AN IMMEASURABLE
DEGREE BUT I'D SPEND MY LAST
71 HOURS TRYING TO MEASURE
IT ANYWAY!



WHAT WAS THIS SENTENCE
THAT!?

JUST BROKE
THE SOUND
BARRIER.

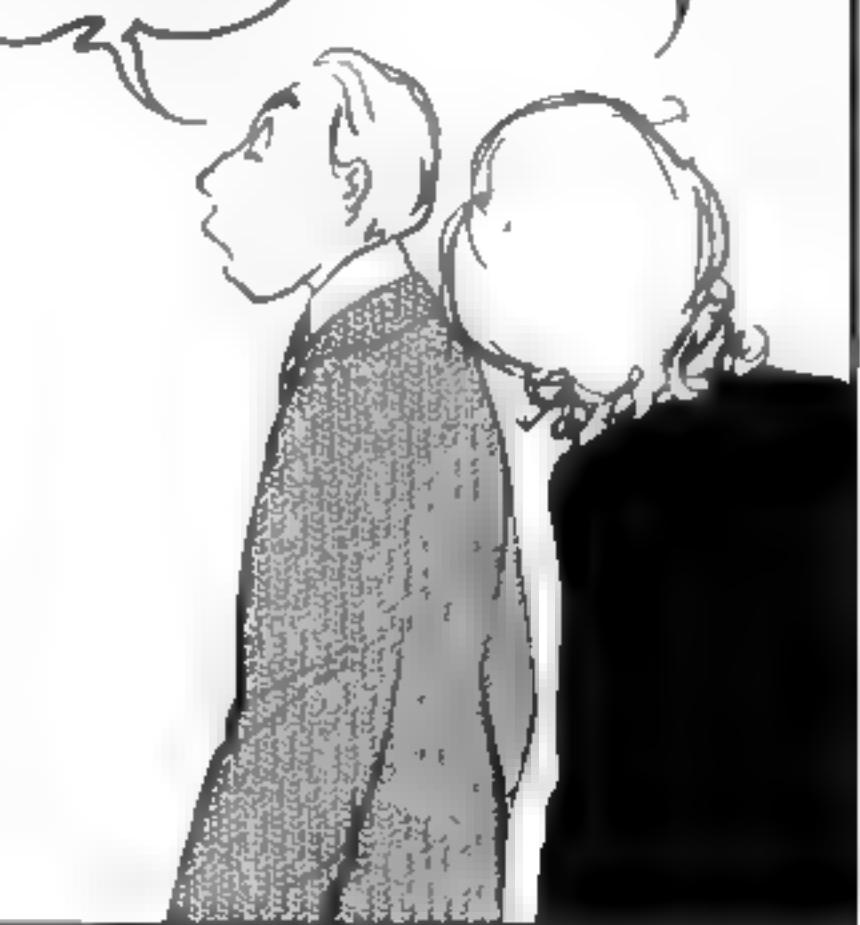


YOU ALLOWED AN INSANE
FARMER AND HIS MARCH
HARE TO TALK YOU OUT
OF THE PRIESTHOOD?!



MONTY
IS NOT THE
MARCH
HARE.

CHESHIRE
CAT, THEN.



MONTY IS GOD!
HIS FRIENDS JUST
CALL HIM MONTY.

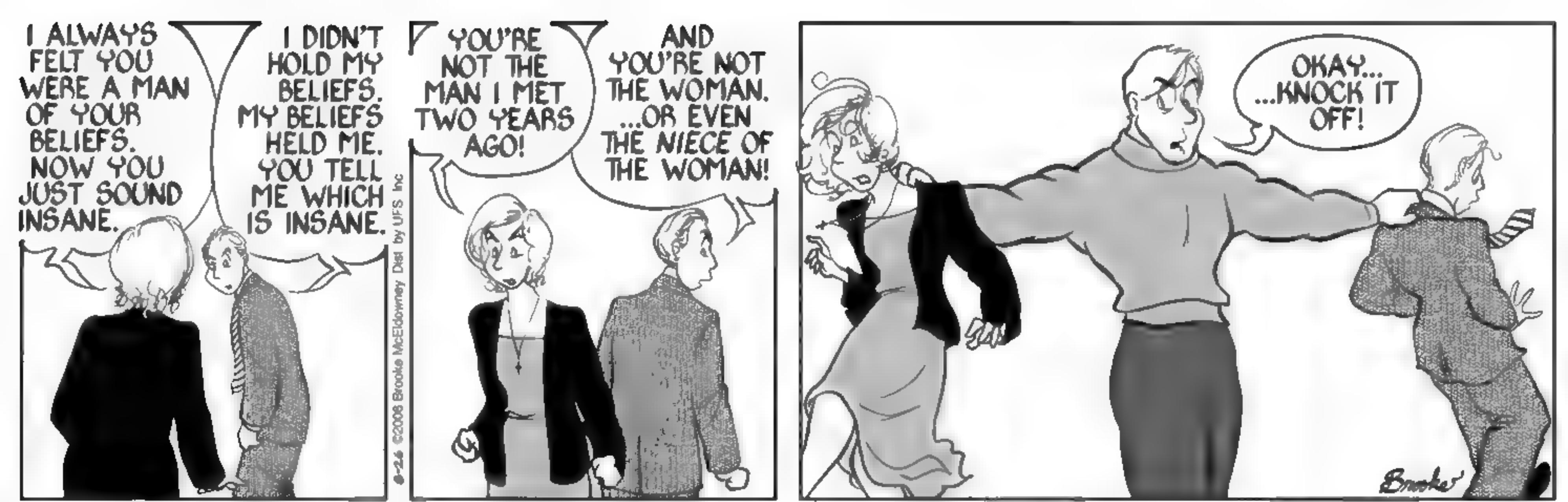
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Brooke



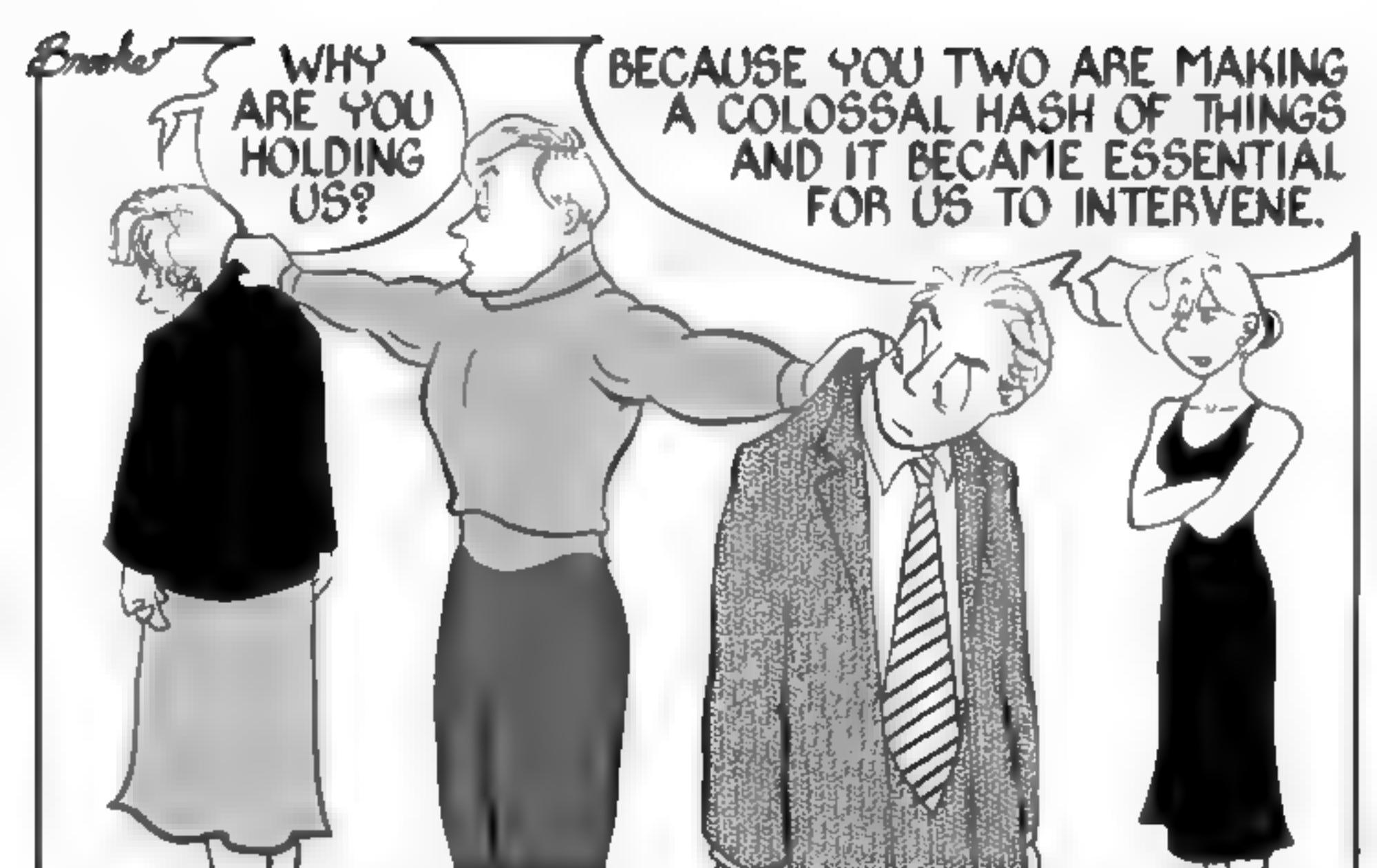
HE'S
LOSING
GROUND.

SHE'S
EDGING
AWAY
FROM
HIM.





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ANYONE CAN RECOGNIZE THE ENDURING
BOND YOU TWO SHARE, AS WELL AS
THE WHOPPING BOO-BOO YOU ARE
ABOUT TO FORGE OUT OF YOUR
OWN CUSSEDNESS.

I THINK JANE
AUSTEN
SAID
IT BEST
WHEN...

NOT
JANE
AUSTEN!
NOT
NOW!

Brooke

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IT'S JUST AS IF
WE WERE RESCUED
FROM THE BRINK
BY THE CAPED
CRUSADERS.

BY
SUPERMAN
AND LOIS
LANE.



WE DID
A GOOD THING,
EH, OLLIE?

YOU'RE
ABSOLUTELY
RIGHT,
STANLEY.

Brooke

A VOW OF CELIBACY
DIDN'T MEAN I COULDN'T
LOOK INTO SOMEONE'S
EYES...FOR INSTANCE...
AND SEE THE MOST
BEAUTIFUL HAZEL...
...OR HEAR A VOICE
AND WANT TO GO
ON LISTENING
DAY AND
NIGHT.

Brooks

...OR, FOR INSTANCE,
THAT SOMEONE'S
PRESENCE WOULDN'T
FILL A VOID IN MY
SOUL...OR MAKE ME
ACHE FOR HER RETURN
EVERY TIME SHE
SAID GOODNIGHT.

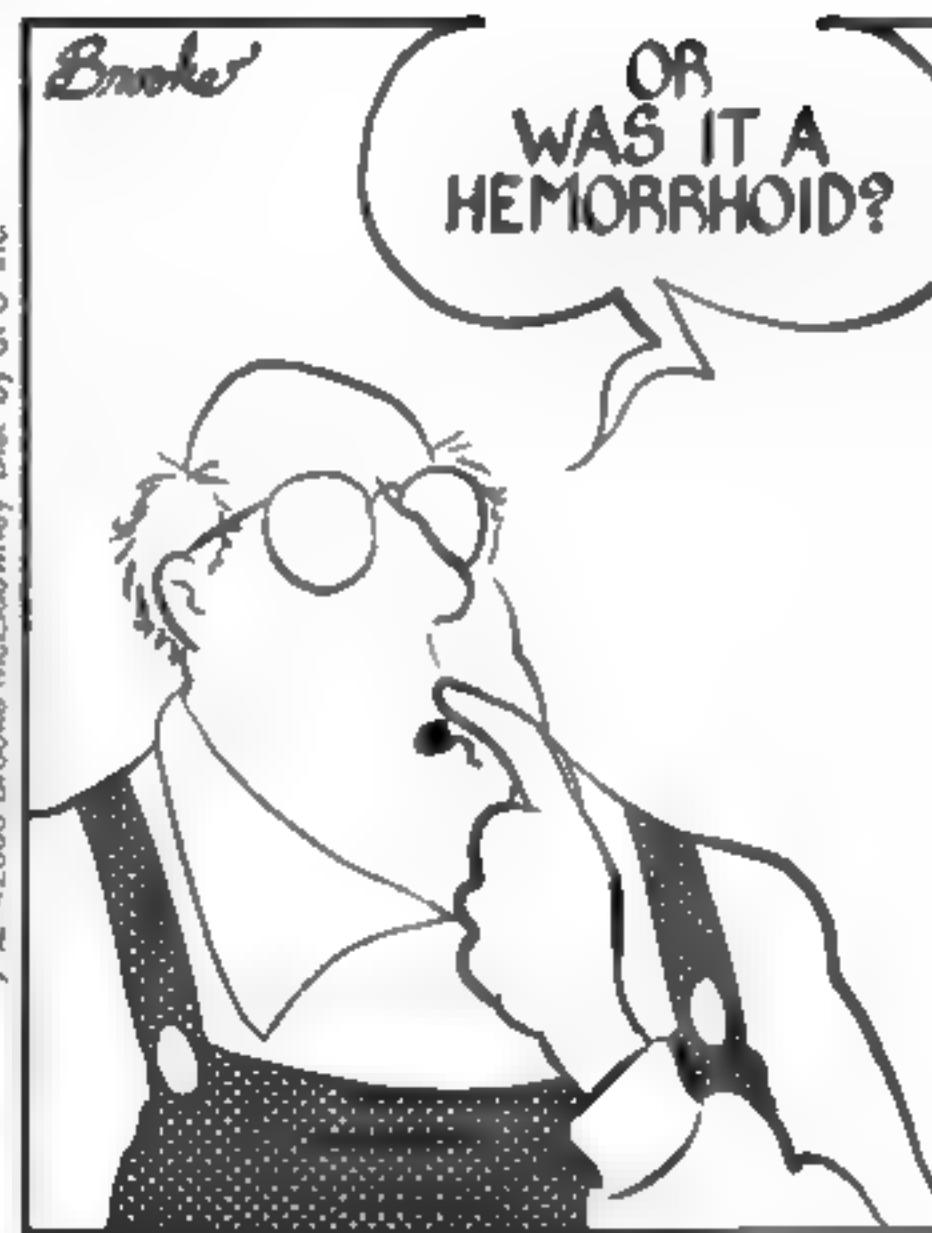
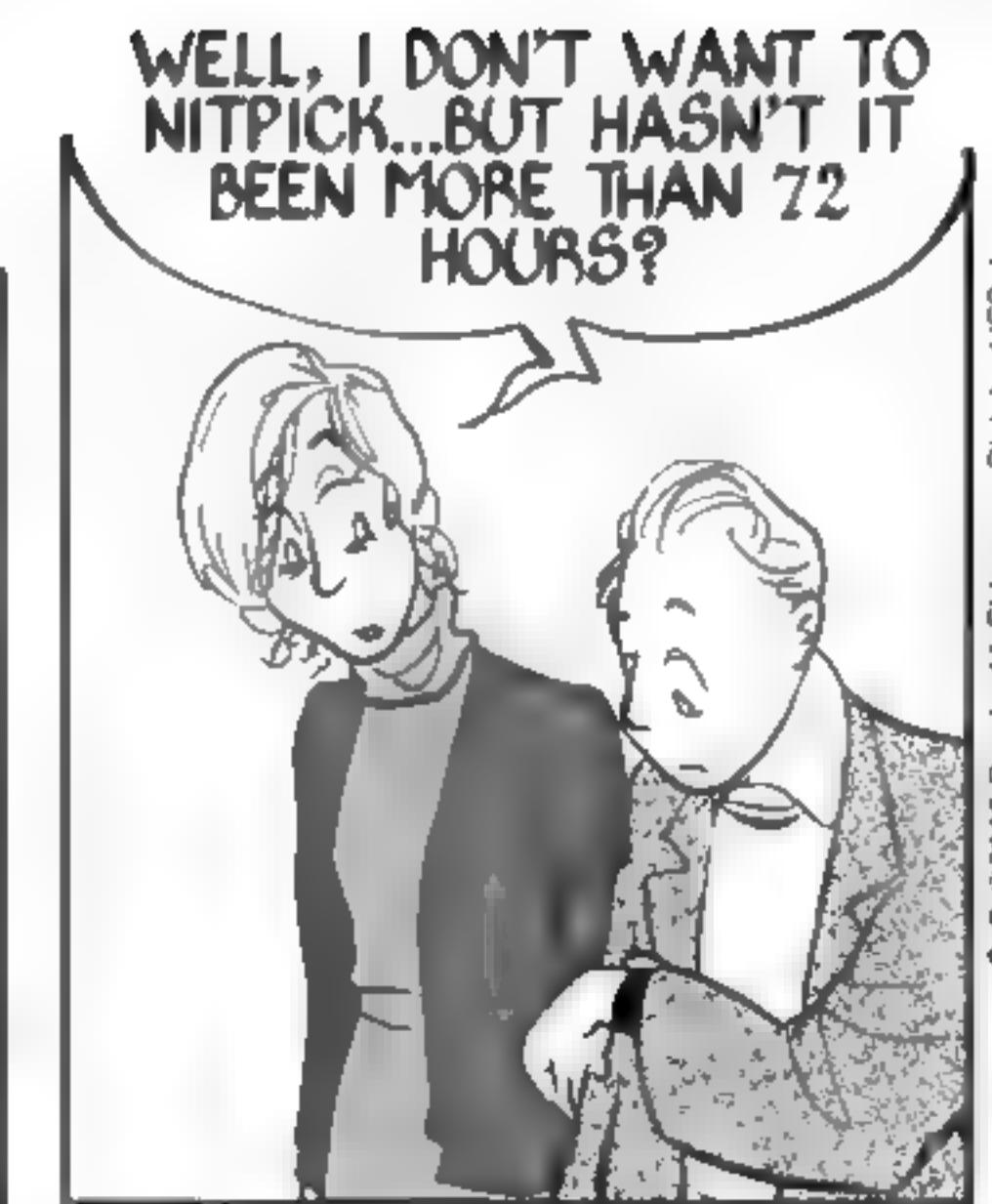
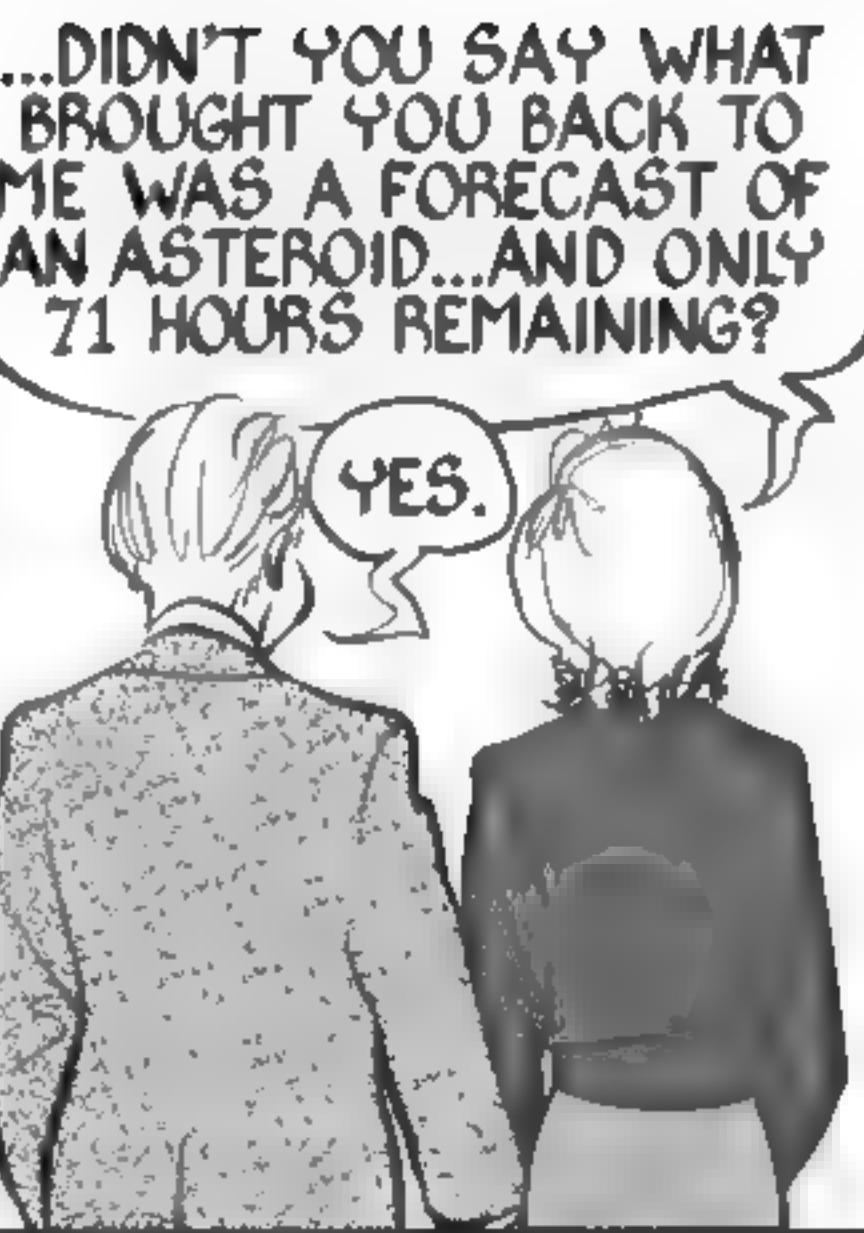
MY VOW DIDN'T MEAN,
FOR INSTANCE, THAT I
COULD NOT REGARD
SOMEONE WITH GLADNESS
AND GRATITUDE AS A
MANIFESTATION
OF GOD'S GRACE...

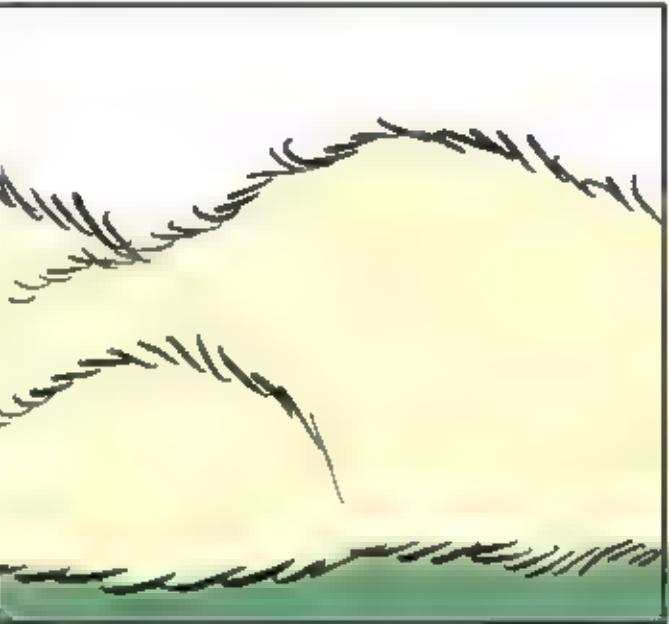
...OR THAT
THAT PERSON COULD
NOT BE YOU.

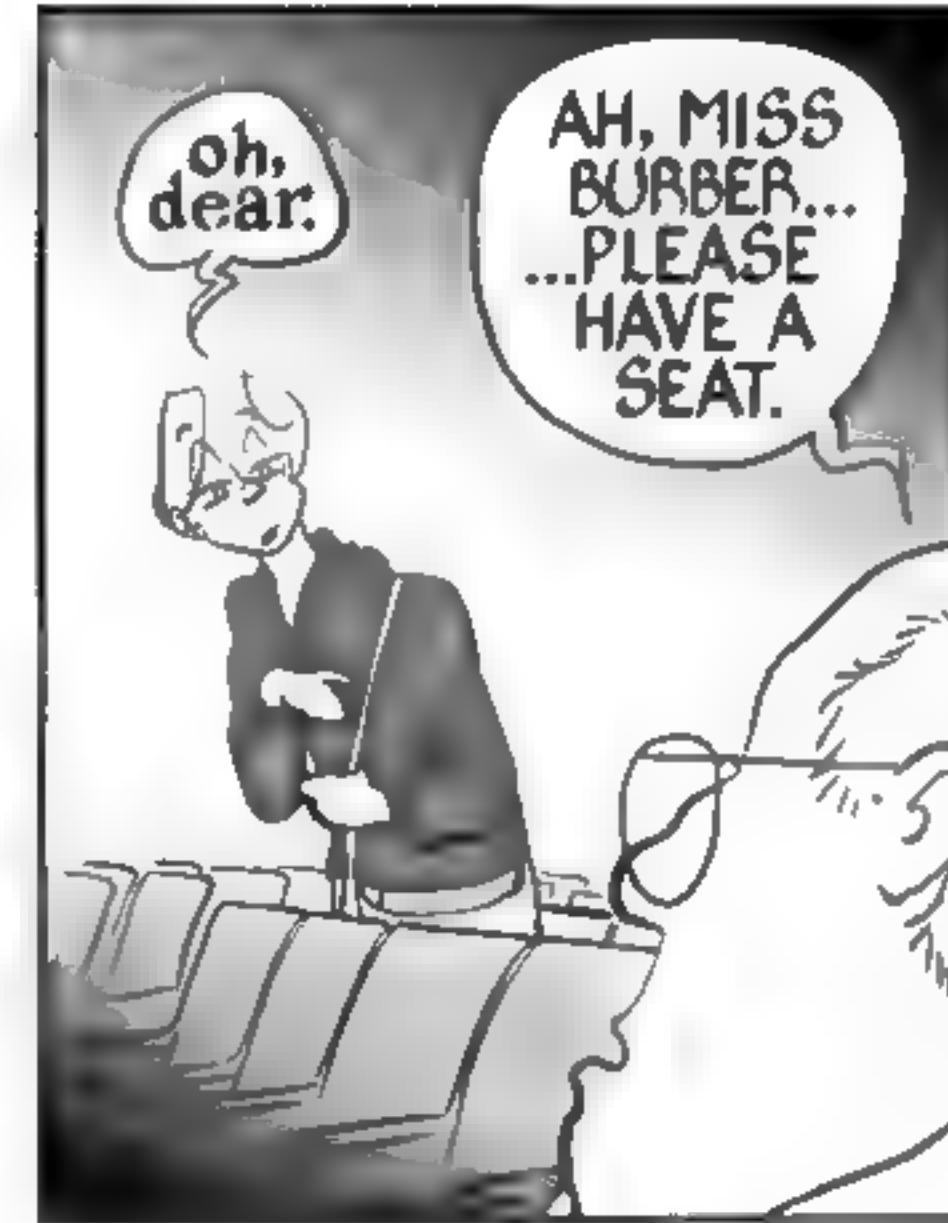
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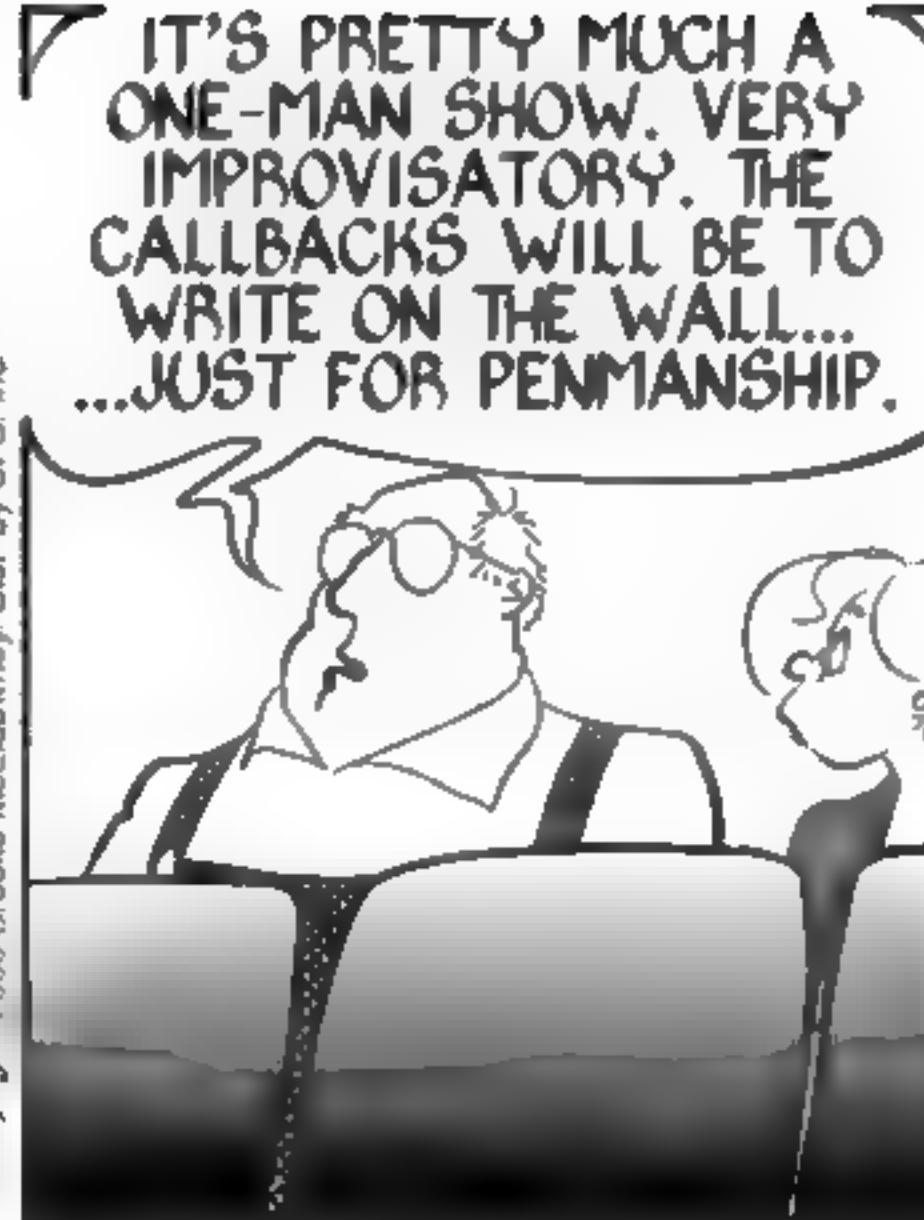
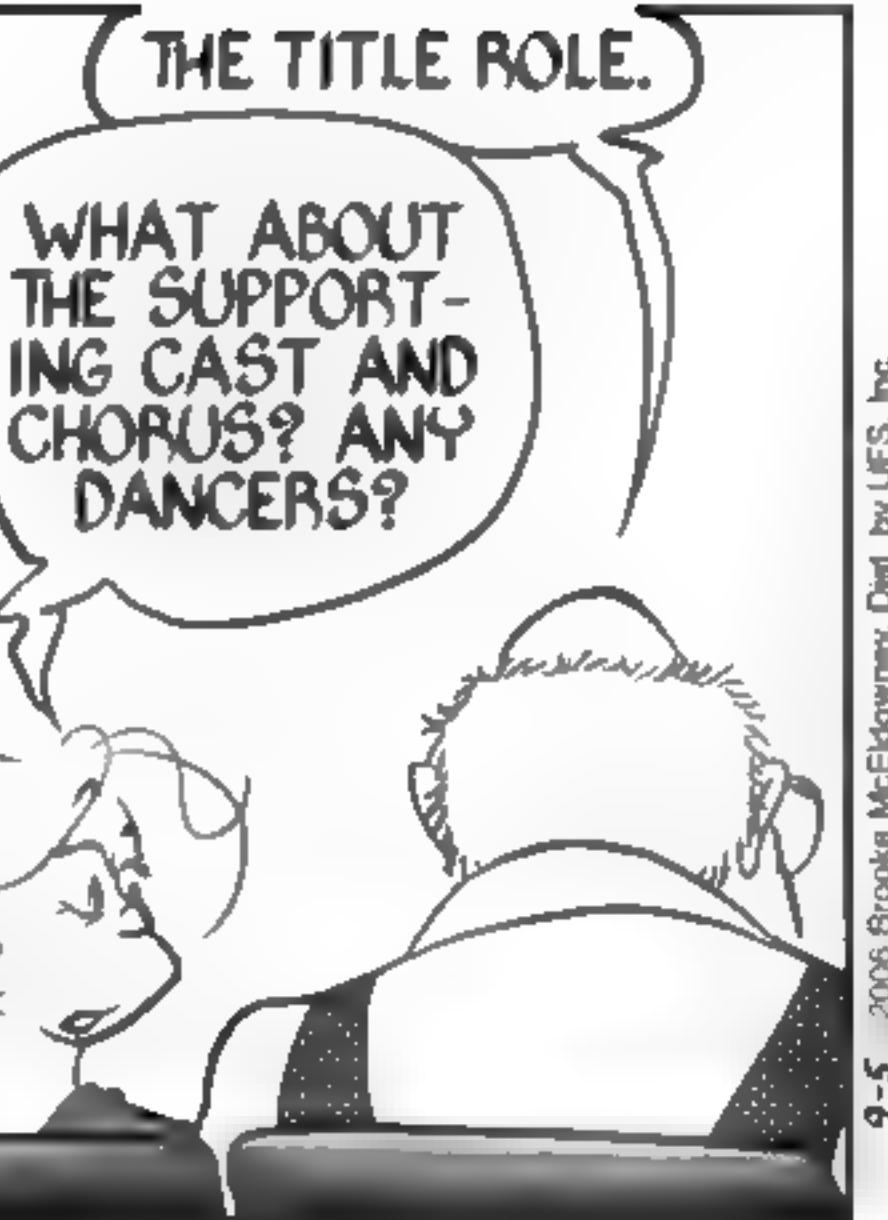
FOR
INSTANCE?

OH, GOD,
YES...
...FOR
INSTANCE.









OKAY, NOW TURN...
...ATTITUDE...BELIEVE, RUN
A-A-A-ND LEAP!...
TWO, THREE,
FOUR. OKAY,
THANK YOU.
WE'LL BE IN
TOUCH.







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IF "MEGA-GOD" IS REALLY
HIS IDEA, WHY DOESN'T
HE JUST
CAST IT
HIMSELF?

HE TRIED,
BUT COLIN
MOCHRIE
WAS
ALREADY
BOOKED.

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SO MONTY
CALLED ME IN
TO START
CANVASSING
FOR TALENT.

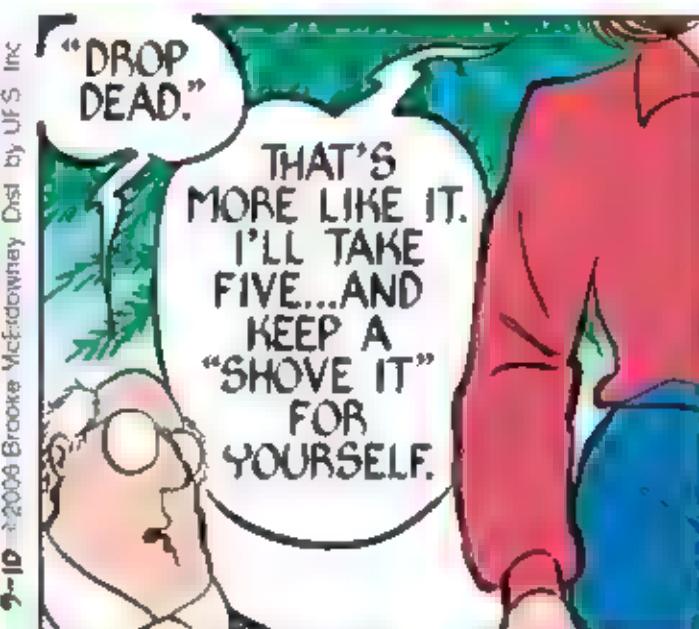
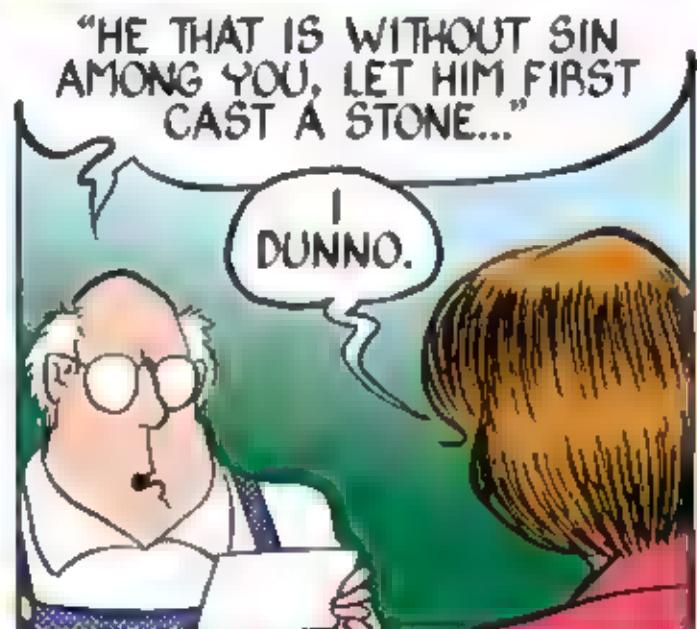
Brooke

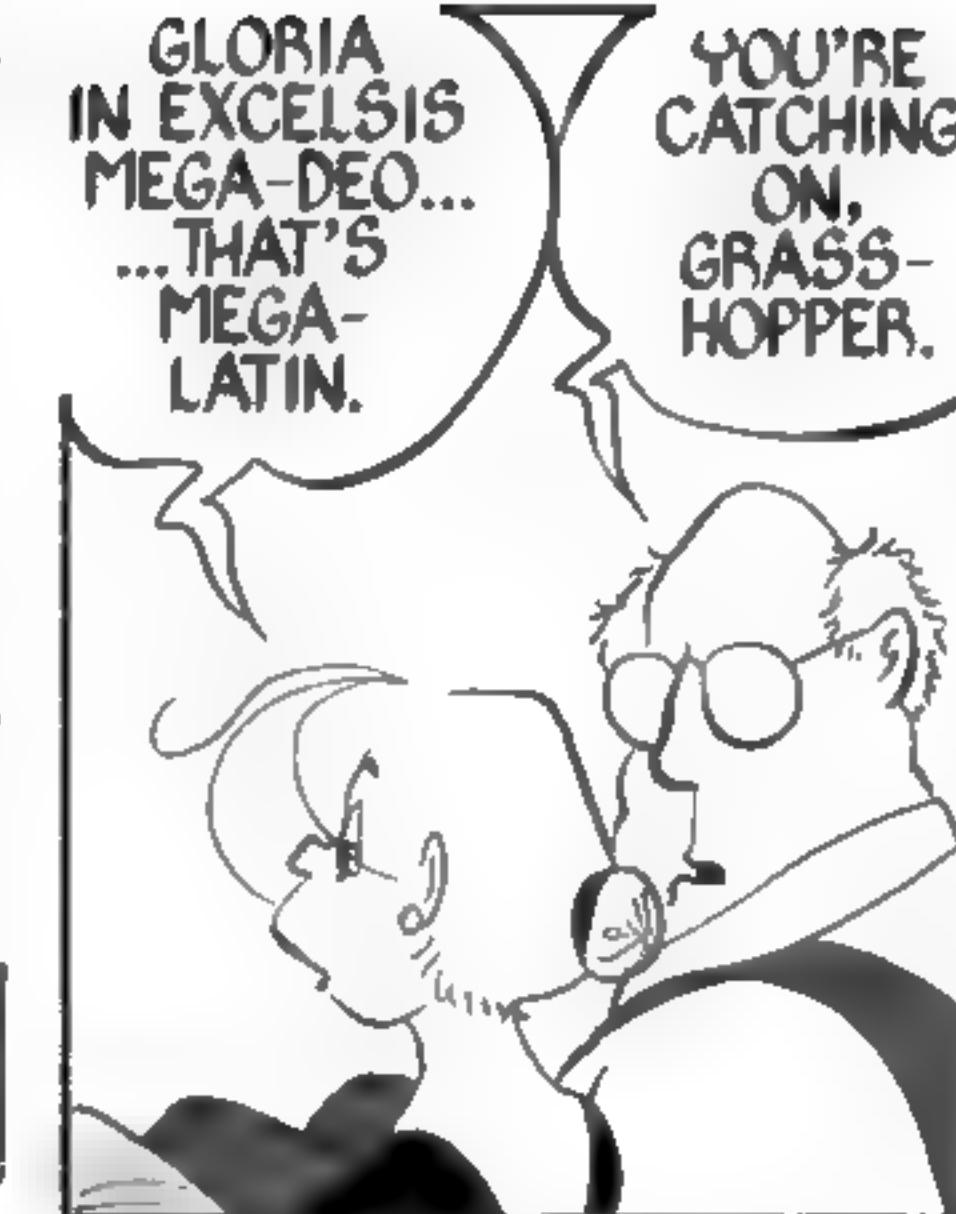
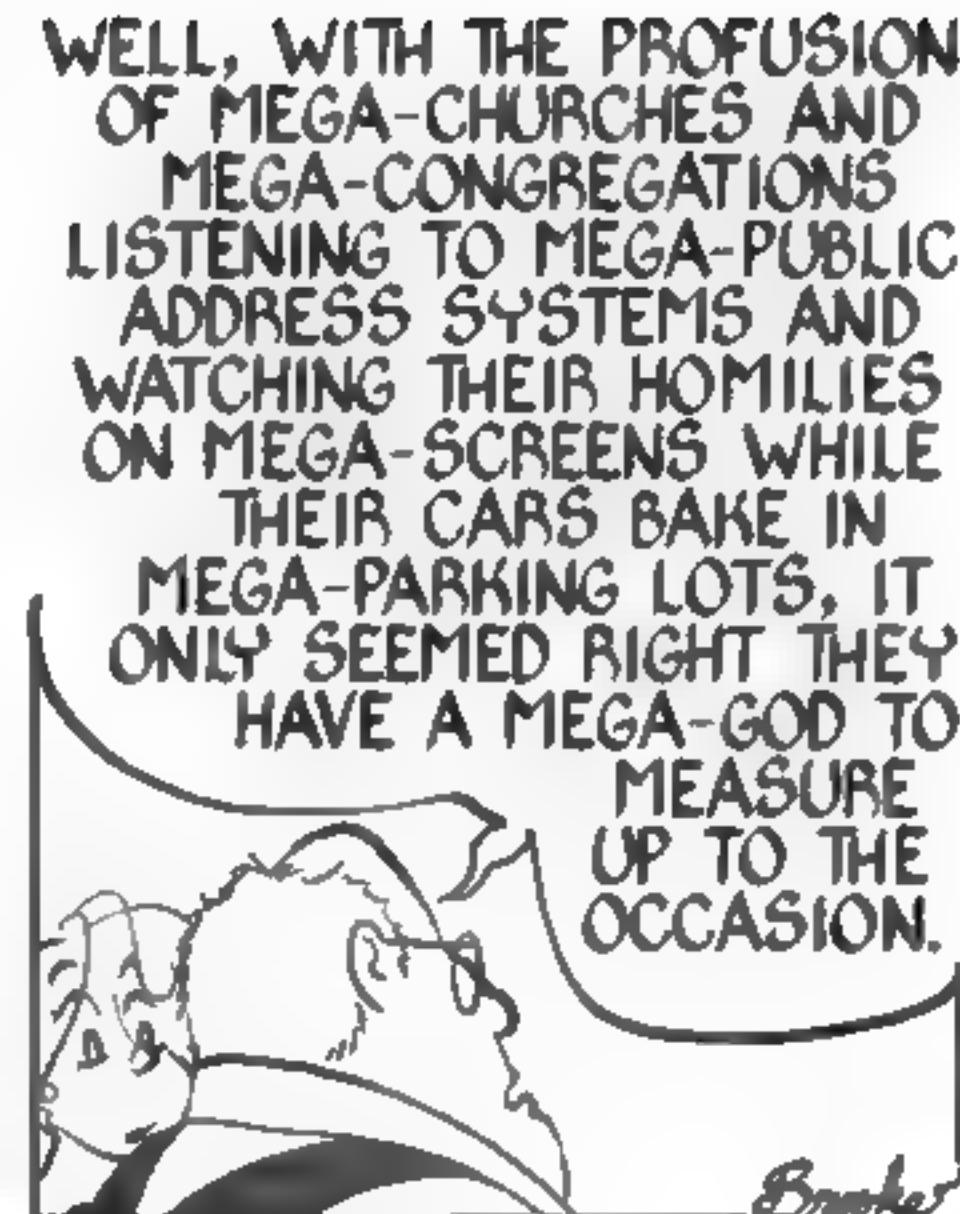


SORRY, DEAR, YOU'RE JUST
NOT THE RIGHT
TYPE. BUT,
YOU COULD
PLAY HIS
PERKY BUT
WAYWARD
SIDEKICK.

MEGA-
SATAN?





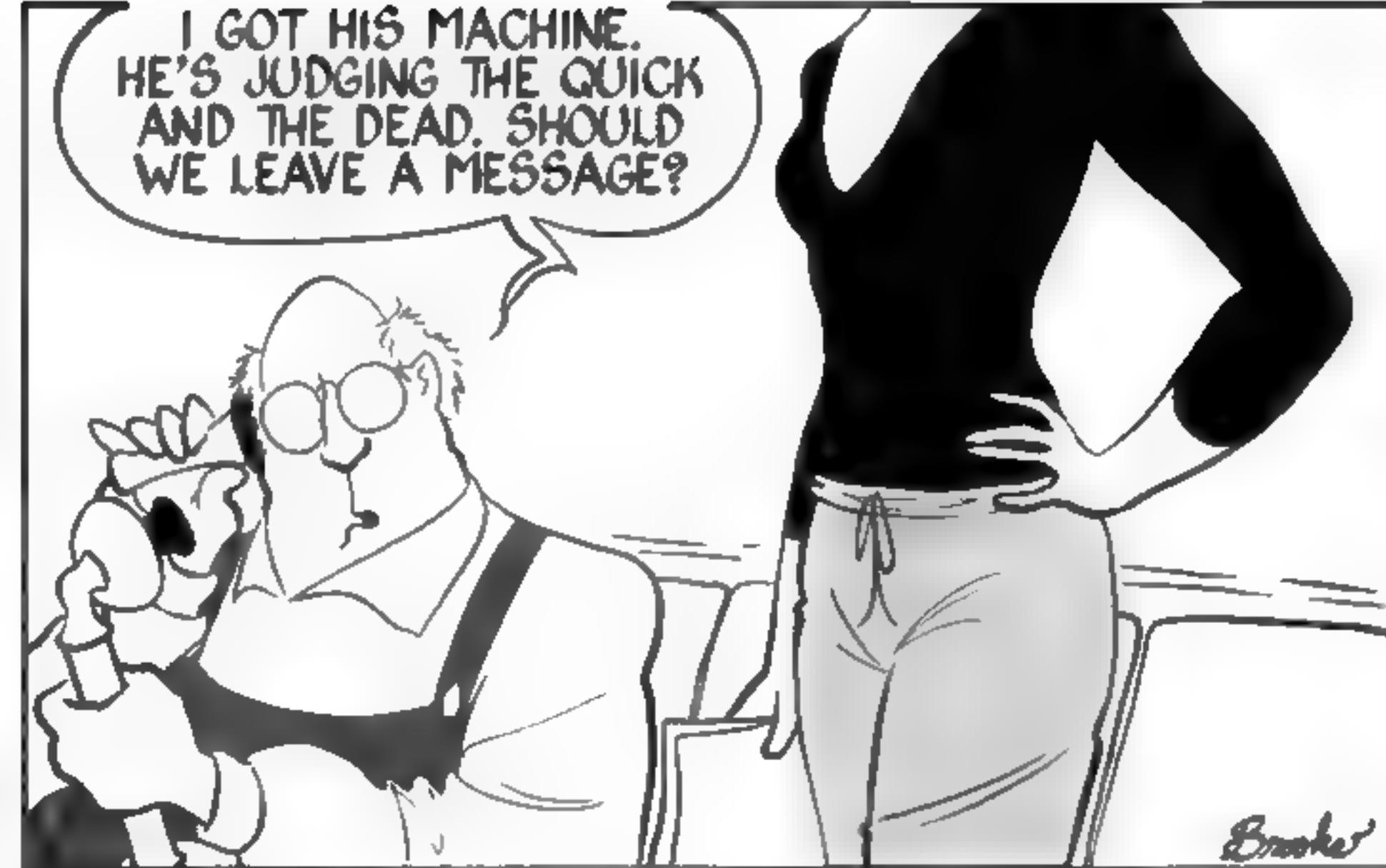


WHAT ABOUT THIS GUY?
HE GOT GOOD REVIEWS AS
HENRY V, AND
HAROLD HILL IN
“THE MUSIC
MAN.”



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TEETH OKAY, SHOULDERS
GOOD...EYES ARE A TAD
PIGGY...I'LL ASK
MONTY.





I GOT A MESSAGE FROM MONTY. THIS LAST APPLICANT FOR MEGA-GOD...HE SAYS TO TAKE A PASS. WE'RE LOOKING FOR REAL TALENT.



TALENT!? THE GUY HAS AWARDS COMING OUT HIS EARS, HIS SHAKESPEARE HAS BEEN HAILED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE ATLANTIC, SOME HAVE SAID HE WEARS THE MANTLE OF OLIVIER.

Brooke

YES, BUT HOW WILL HE LOOK IN A RED SPEEDO, ADMINISTERING THE KISS OF LIFE TO AN AUGMENTED BLONDE UNDER THE WATCHFUL GAZE OF A CROWD OF MOUTH-BREATHING, SPRING BREAK COEDS?



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ANYBODY CAN PLAY SHYLOCK, BUT HOW MANY CAN PUT HIM OVER IN A SPANDEX THONG FULL OF SAND?



I SO LOVE IT WHEN YOU START DEFINING GREATNESS.

MONTY'S CALLED OFF AUDITIONS FOR MEGA-GOD. HE'S NOT ENTHUSED WITH THE CROP WE'VE BEEN GETTING. HE SAYS THE MEGA-CHURCHES WILL JUST HAVE TO CONTENT THEMSELVES WITH THE MENTALISTS, PRESTIDIGITATORS AND OTHER FRAUDS TO WHICH THEY'RE ACCUSTOMED.

Brooke

WHY DOESN'T MONTY GET PERSONALLY INVOLVED? HE'S A NON-LINEAR BEING...HE CAN BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.



IN A TRICE HE COULD CURE ALL THE WORLD'S WOES. FOR INSTANCE, I HAVE A LITTLE SKIN CONDITION ON MY ELBOW...

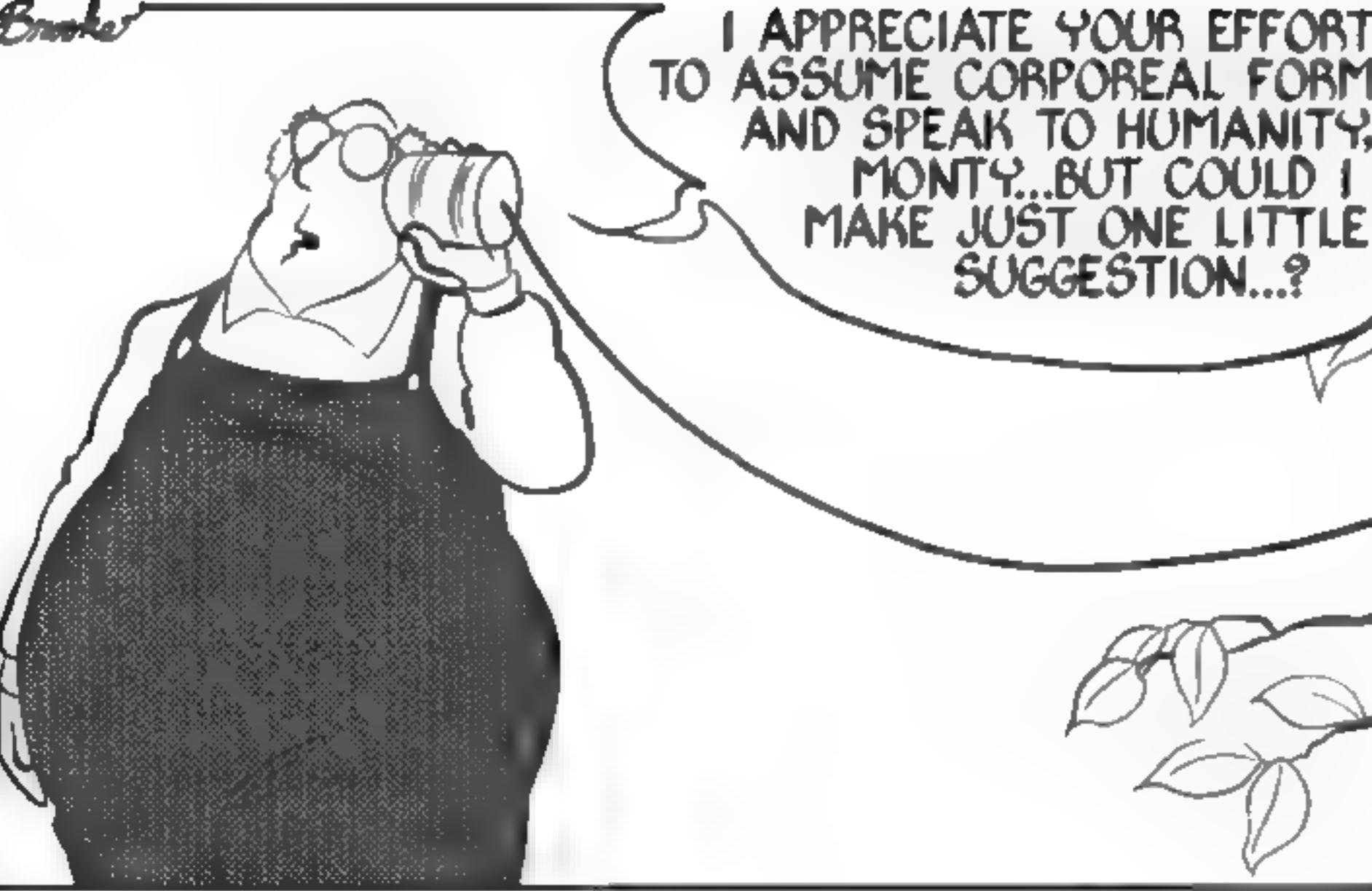


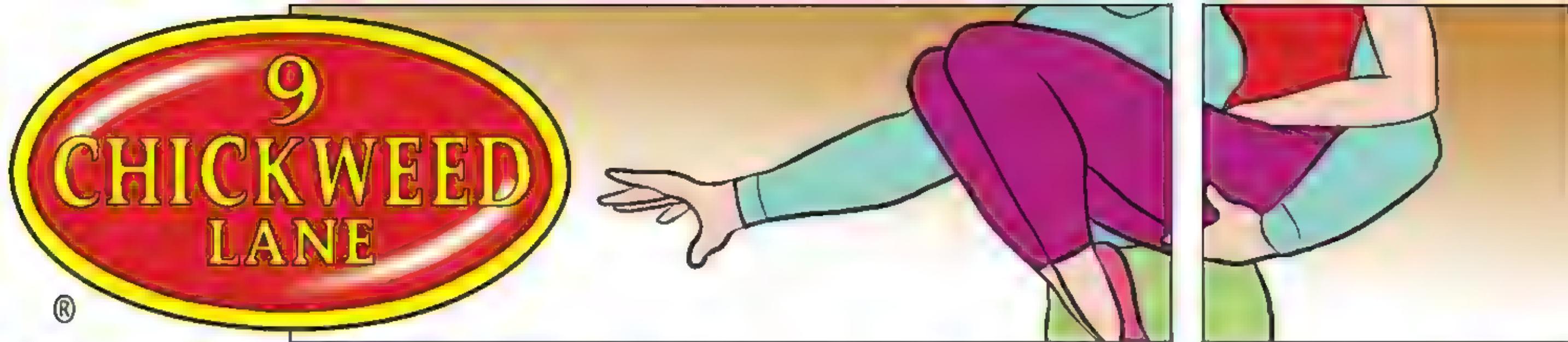
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE ENTITY WHO FORGED THE COSMOS FROM A FORMLESS VOID, THE MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH. YOU DON'T EXPECT HIM TO TAKE ON SOMETHING LIKE THE MEDICAL-HEALTH INSURANCE COMPLEX!

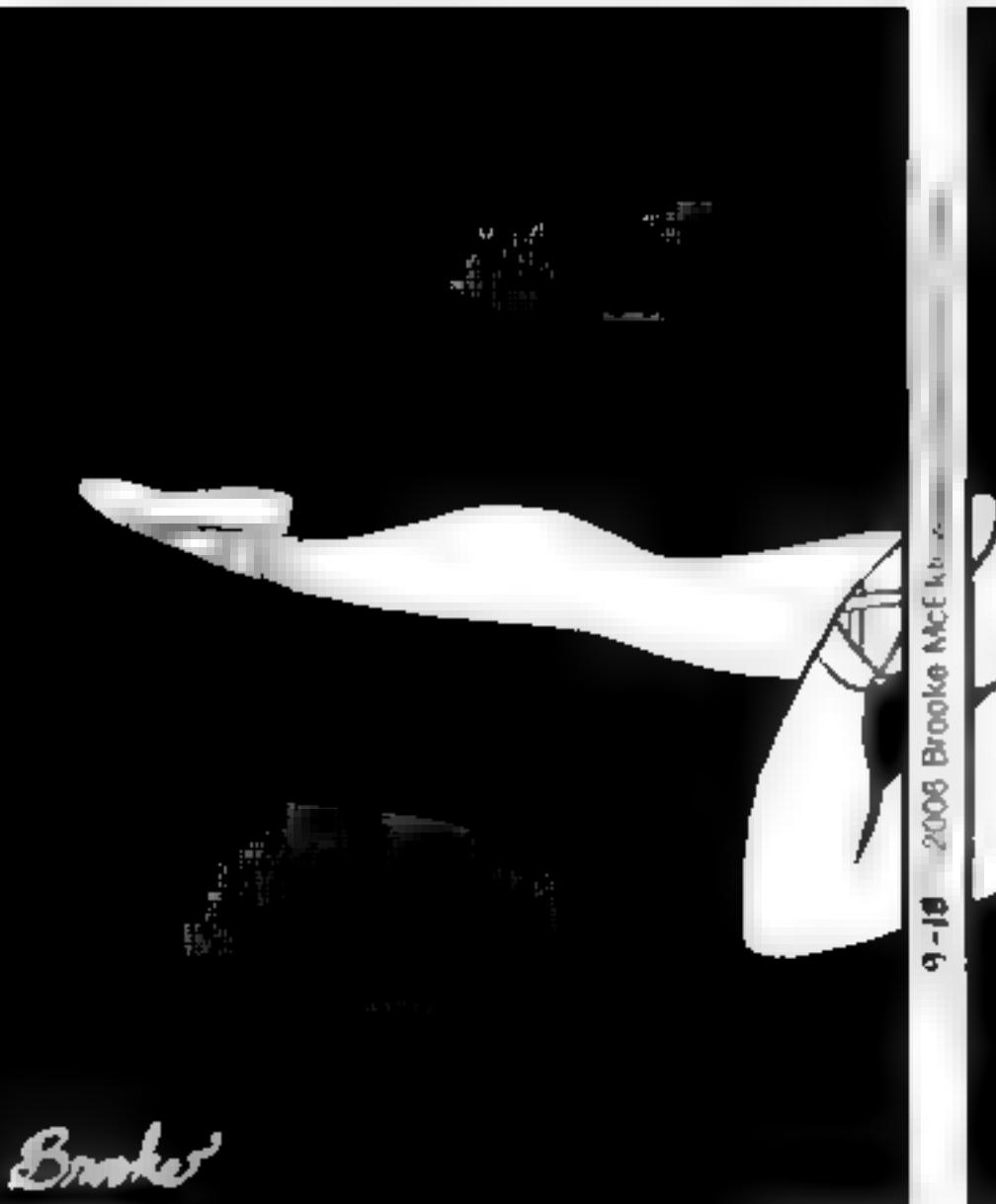


SORRY.
I WAS
TALKING
MADNESS.

Brooke







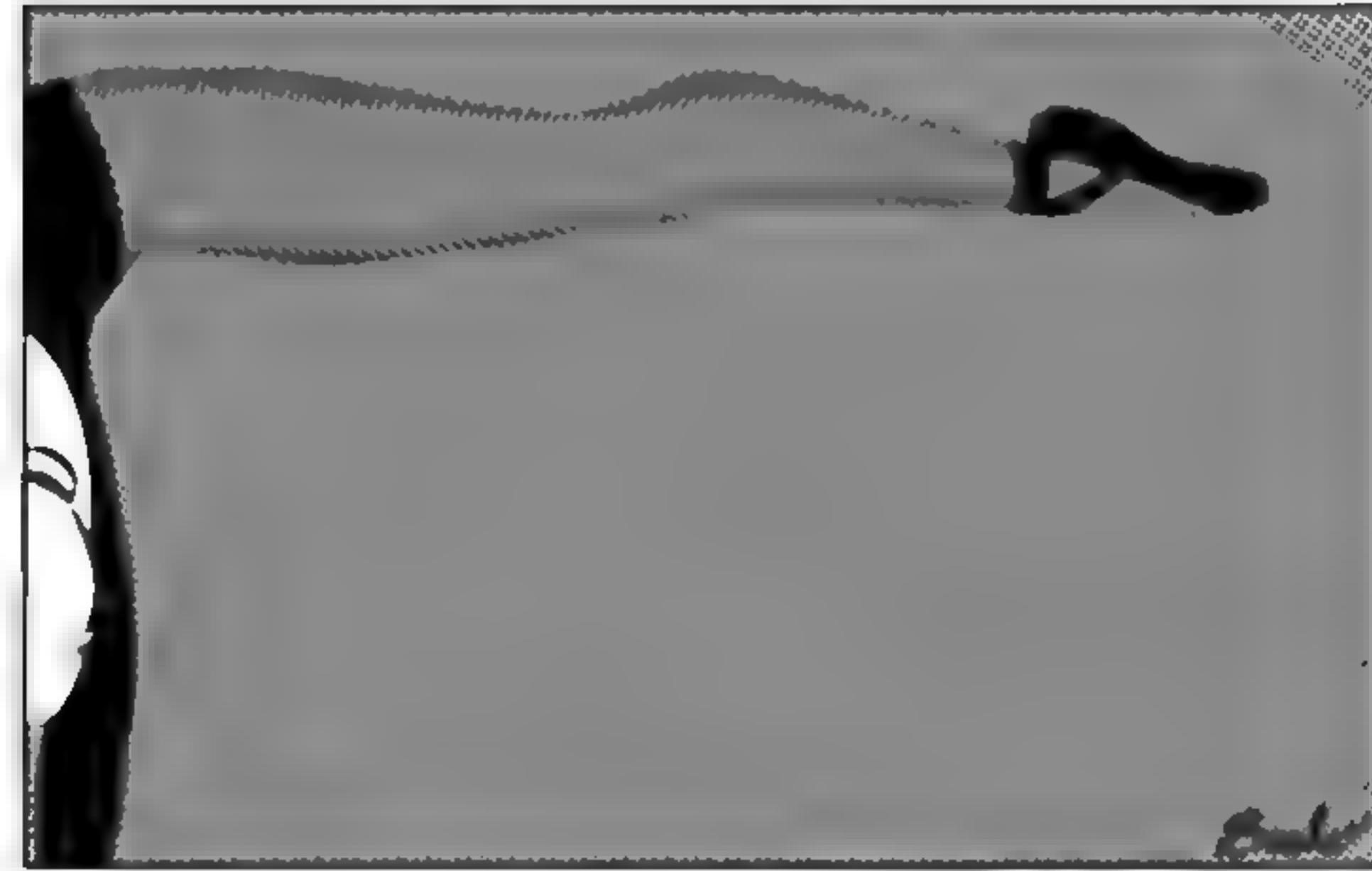
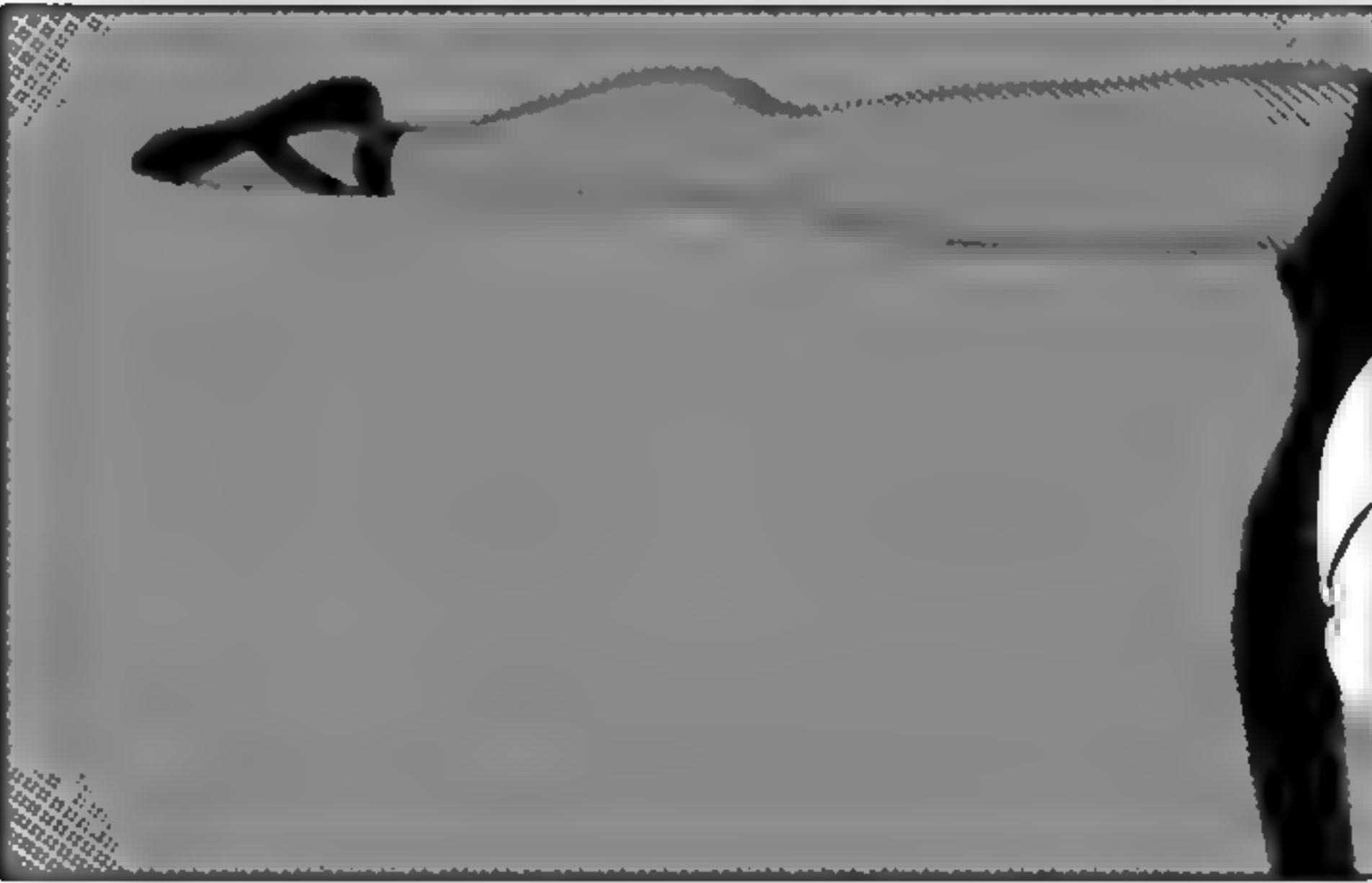
MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX:
PICKING THE
GOOD FIGHT
(A CONCISE
HISTORY)



Brinkley

AT ONE TIME OR
ANOTHER, THE WHOLE
WORLD GOES TO
BLAZES LAUGHING
AT ABSURDITY
RATHER THAN
RECOGNIZE THE
CONVICTION
BEHIND IT.





MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX:
PICKING THE
GOOD FIGHT
(A CONCISE
HISTORY)



Brookner

A PEACEFUL POPULACE
NEVER WANT TO VOTE
FOR A PERSON WHO
IS WARBALD; IN THIS,
THEY AND THEIR
ENEMIES ARE IN
TOTAL ACCORD.





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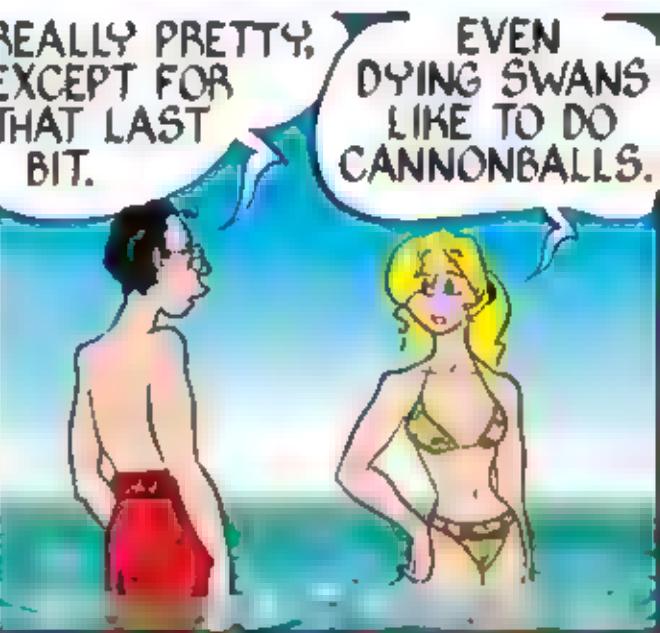
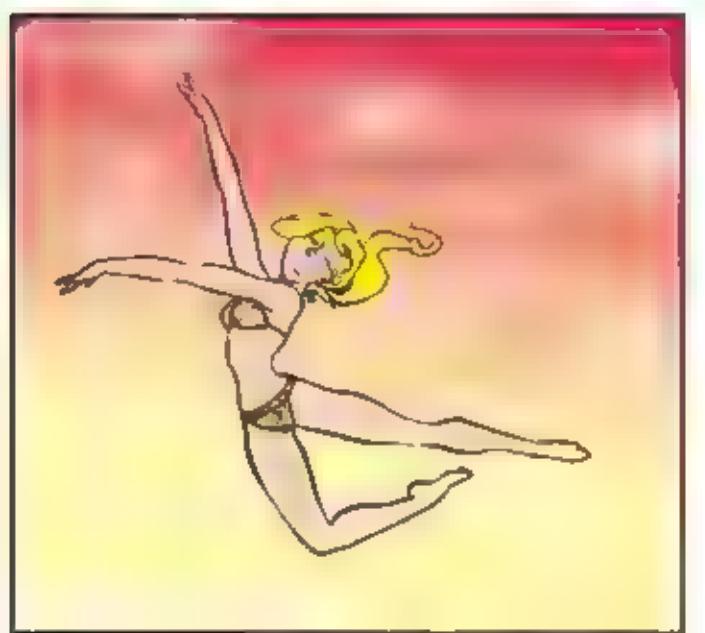
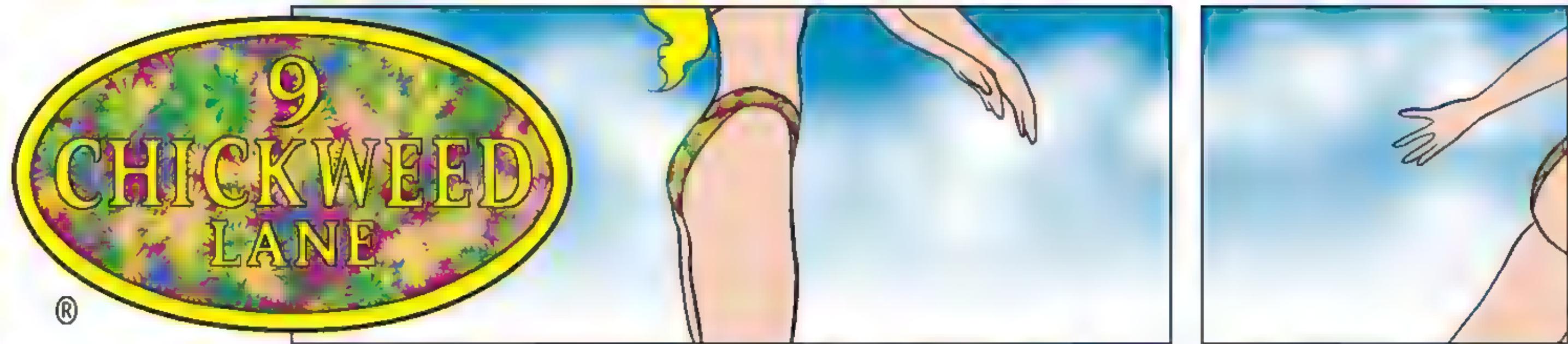
**MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX:
PICKING THE
GOOD FIGHT
(A CONCISE
HISTORY)**

Brooke



**RUNNING AWAY
IS THE COWARD'S
WAY OUT OF WAR.

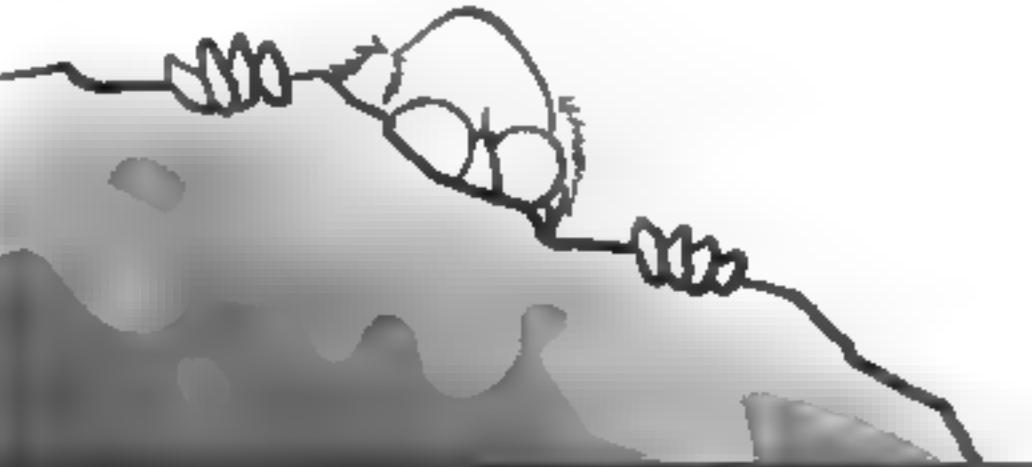
APPEASEMENT
IS THE COWARD'S
WAY INTO ONE.**





Brooke

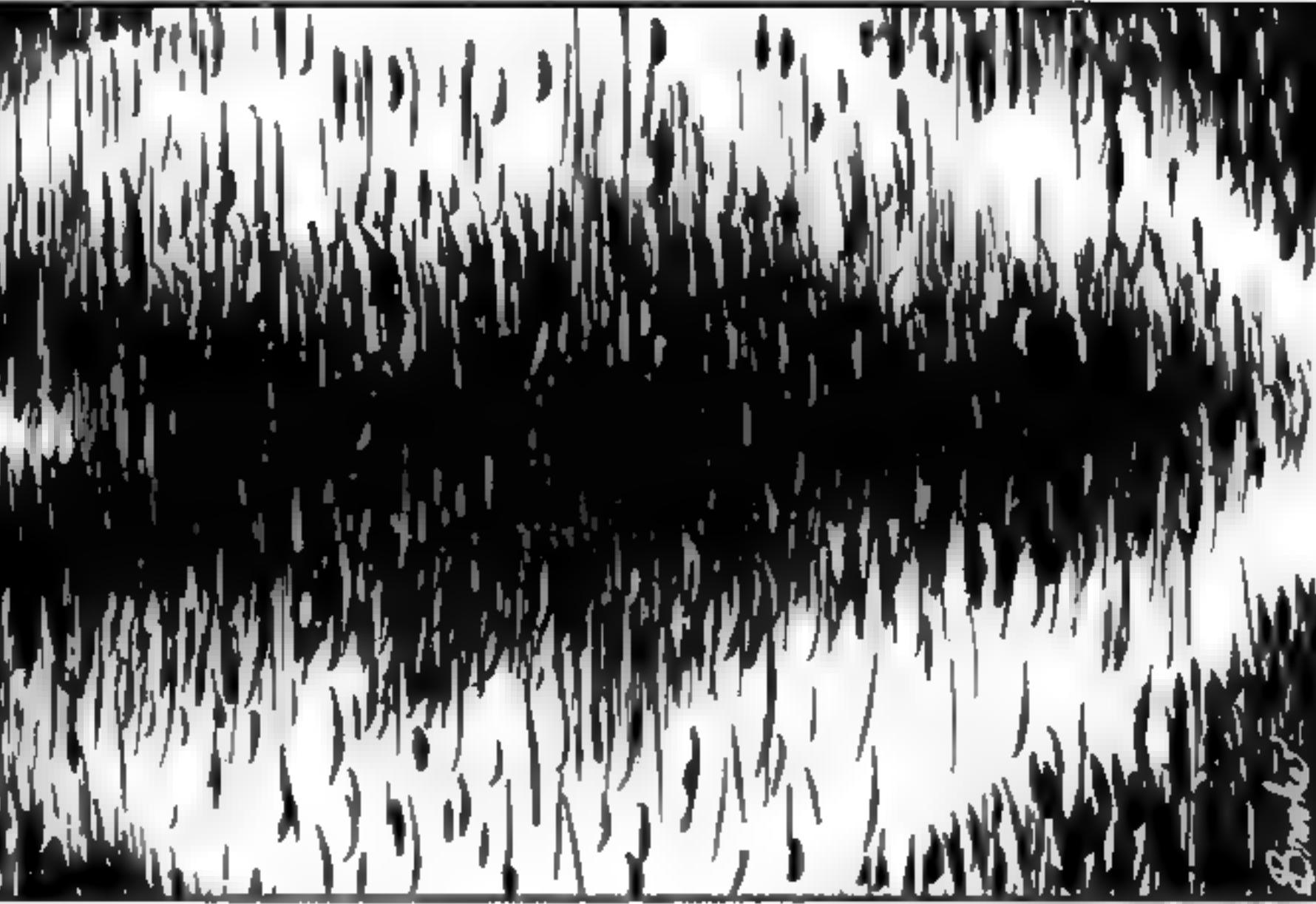
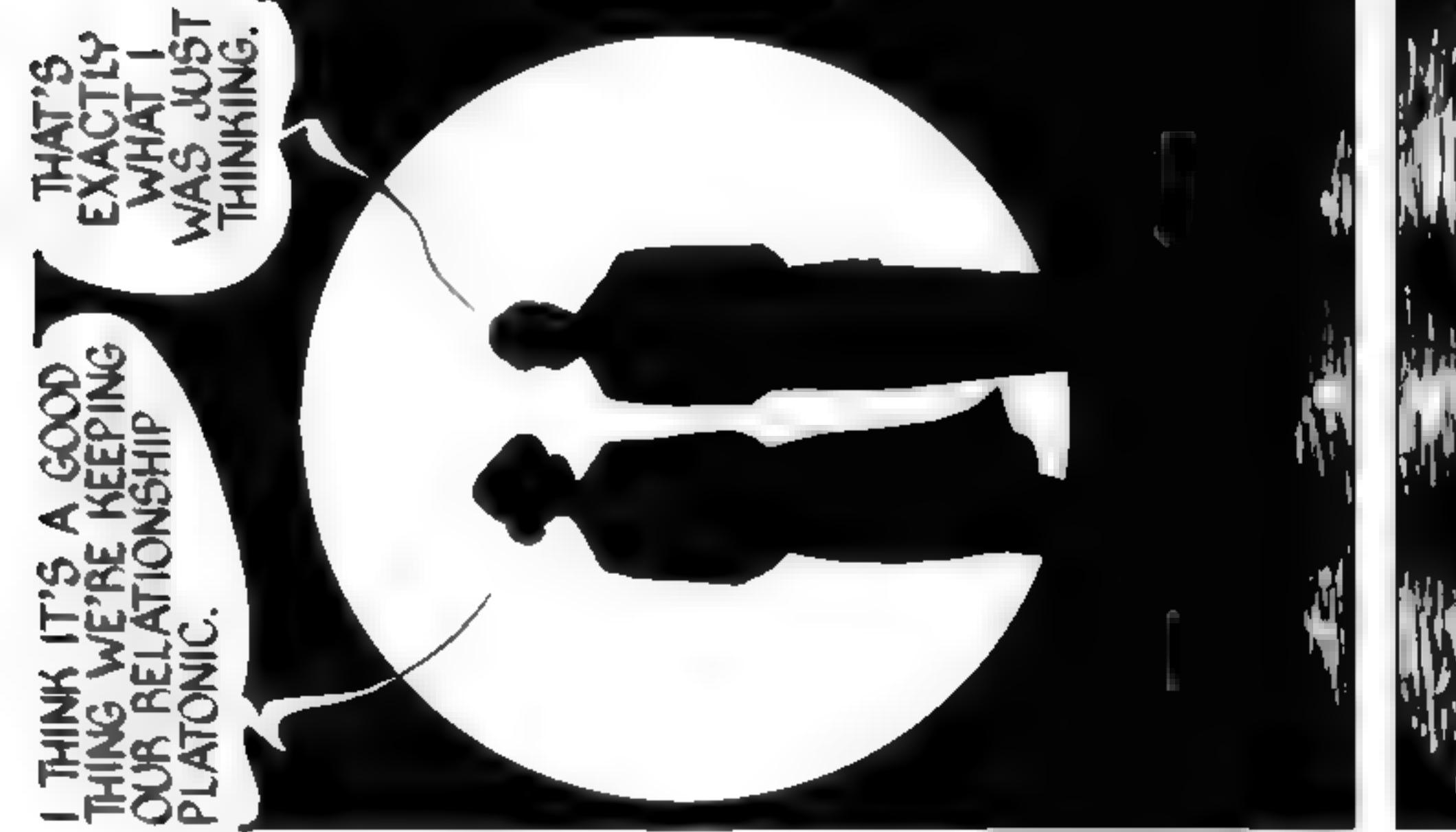
MEDITATIONS
OF THORAX:
PICKING THE
GOOD FIGHT
(A CONCISE
HISTORY)



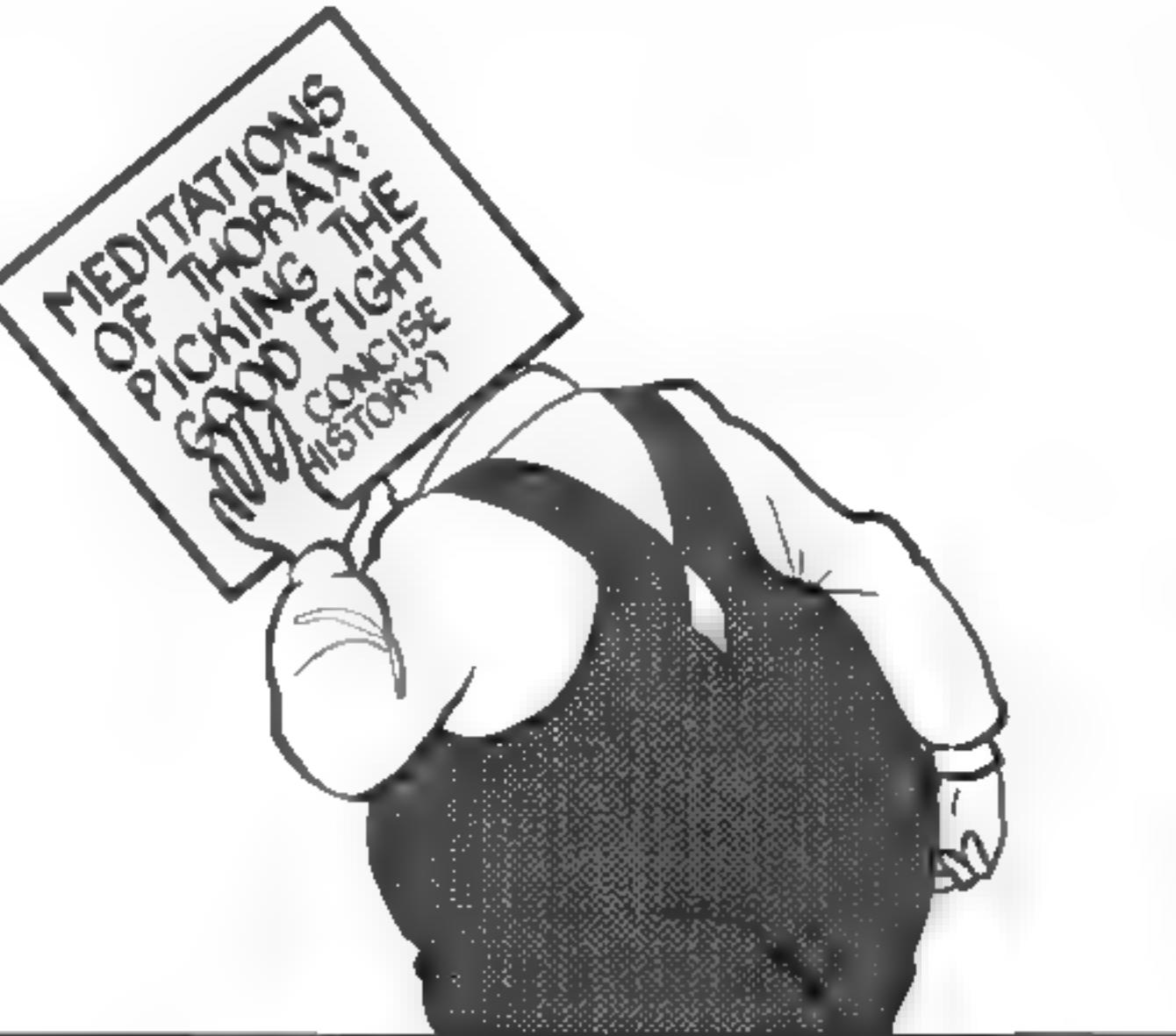
IN MASSIVE
CONFLICTS, ALL
WARRING PARTIES
DECLARE GOD'S
SANCTION AND
PRESENCE ON THEIR
SIDE – ENSURING
THAT NO MATTER
THE OUTCOME, GOD
CANNOT LOSE.



I THINK IT'S A GOOD
THING WE'RE KEEPING
OUR RELATIONSHIP
PLATONIC.



Brooke



WHEN EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO BICKER, BLAME, TEMPORIZIZE, BETRAY, COLLUDE, EVADE, COWER, SUBVERT AND APPEASE HAS BEEN EXHAUSTED, A PEOPLE WILL INEVITABLY PROCLAIM THEIR UNANIMITY IN THE FIGHT FOR WHAT IS RIGHT.

FROM ALL INDICATIONS,
YOU HAVE HAD A LONG
LIFE...HOW DO YOU STAY
SO YOUNG?



SINCE MY APPEARANCE
DOES NOT BETOKEN YOUTH,
YOUR QUERY LEAVES THE
BYSTANDER PONDERING ONE
OF TWO IMPRESSIONS:
EITHER YOU ARE
PATHOLOGICALLY
DISHONEST OR
PAINFULLY
STUPID.



LONGEVITY IS NOT AN
ISSUE OF STAYING YOUNG.
IT IS AN ISSUE OF
NOT DYING.



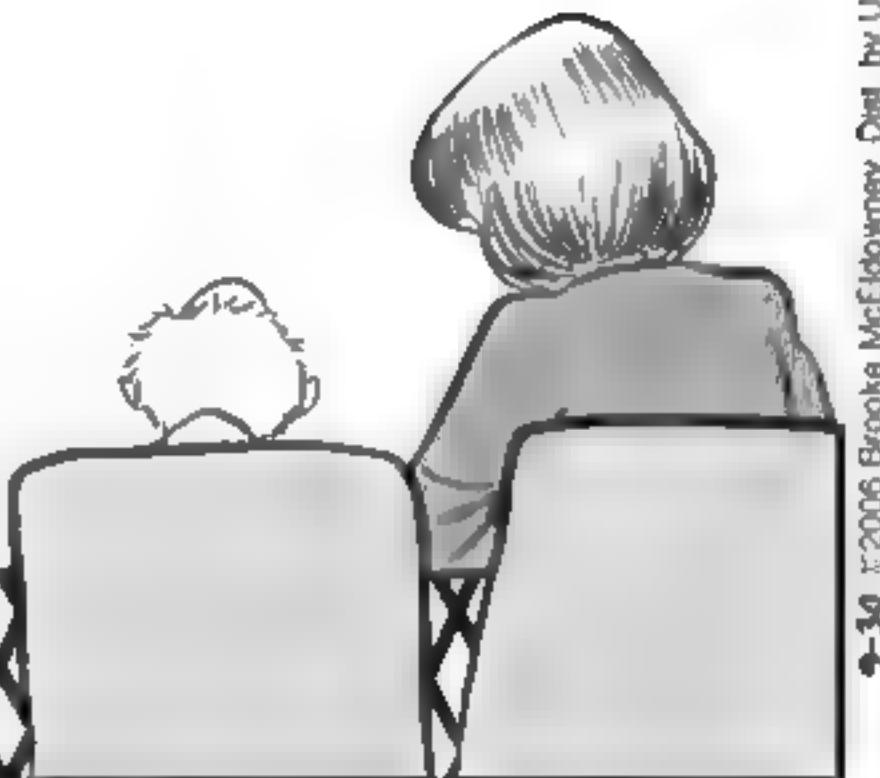
OKAY, THEN...
...HOW DO
YOU STAY
SO OLD?



I JUST FELT I SHOULD BRING
TO YOUR ATTENTION SOME OF
THE MORE IRRATIONAL
IF NOT PREPOSTEROUS
THINGS THORAX
HAS BEEN SAYING.
I THINK IT IS
IMPORTANT FOR
YOU, AS HIS
REPUTEDLY
NEAREST
RELATIVE,
TO BE
AWARE
OF THEM.

YOUR SON SEEMS TO
BE HARMLESS ENOUGH,
BUT ONE IS GIVEN
PAUSE SOMETIMES,
AND FEELS THE NEED
TO CONFER. I HOPE
YOU UNDERSTAND
AND APPRECIATE
MY CONCERN.

Brooker



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AND WHATEVER
THAT IS ON MY
THIGH, GET IT
OFF.

9

CHICKWEED LANE

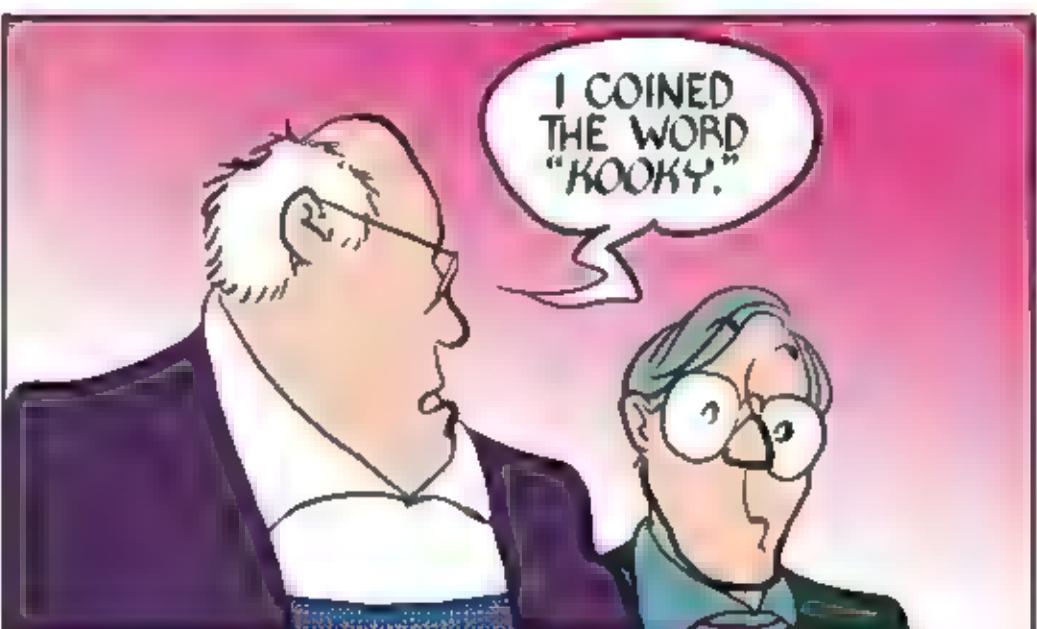
®

THUS IT WAS, IN THE GATHERING CLOUDS OF THE COLD WAR, I REALIZED MY PRESENCE IN THIS WORLD COULD NO LONGER BE THAT OF DISPASSIONATE RECORDER, A RUBBERNECKER TO THE HEAD-ON COLLISION OF HISTORY. BUFFETED ON THE WINDS OF CHANGE, I BECAME INVOLVED.

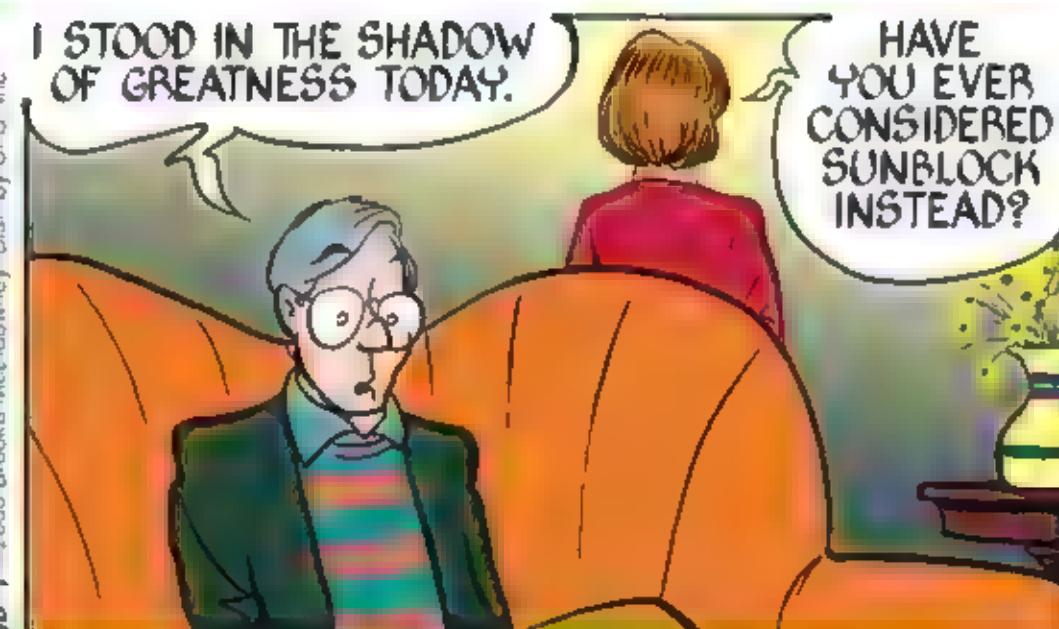
Brooker

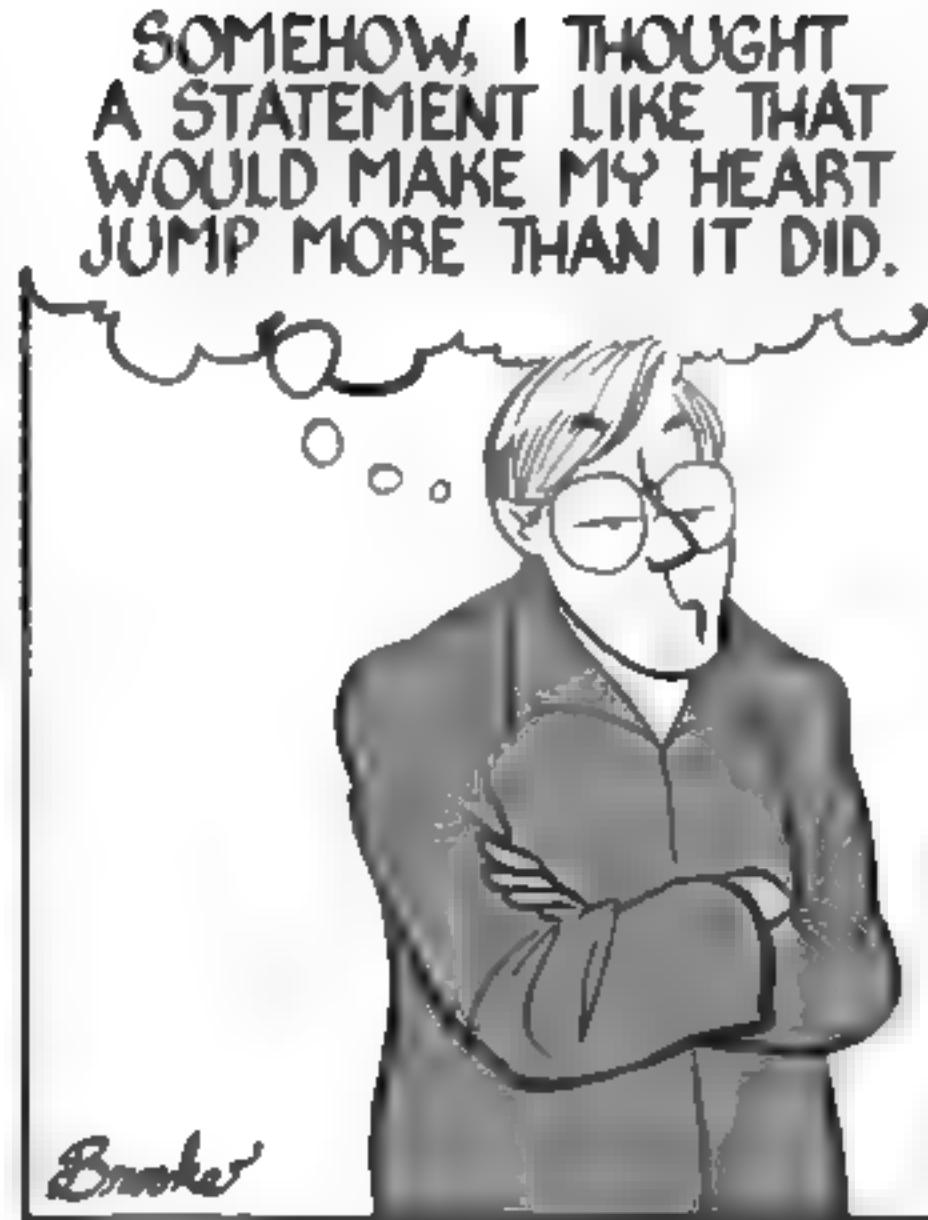
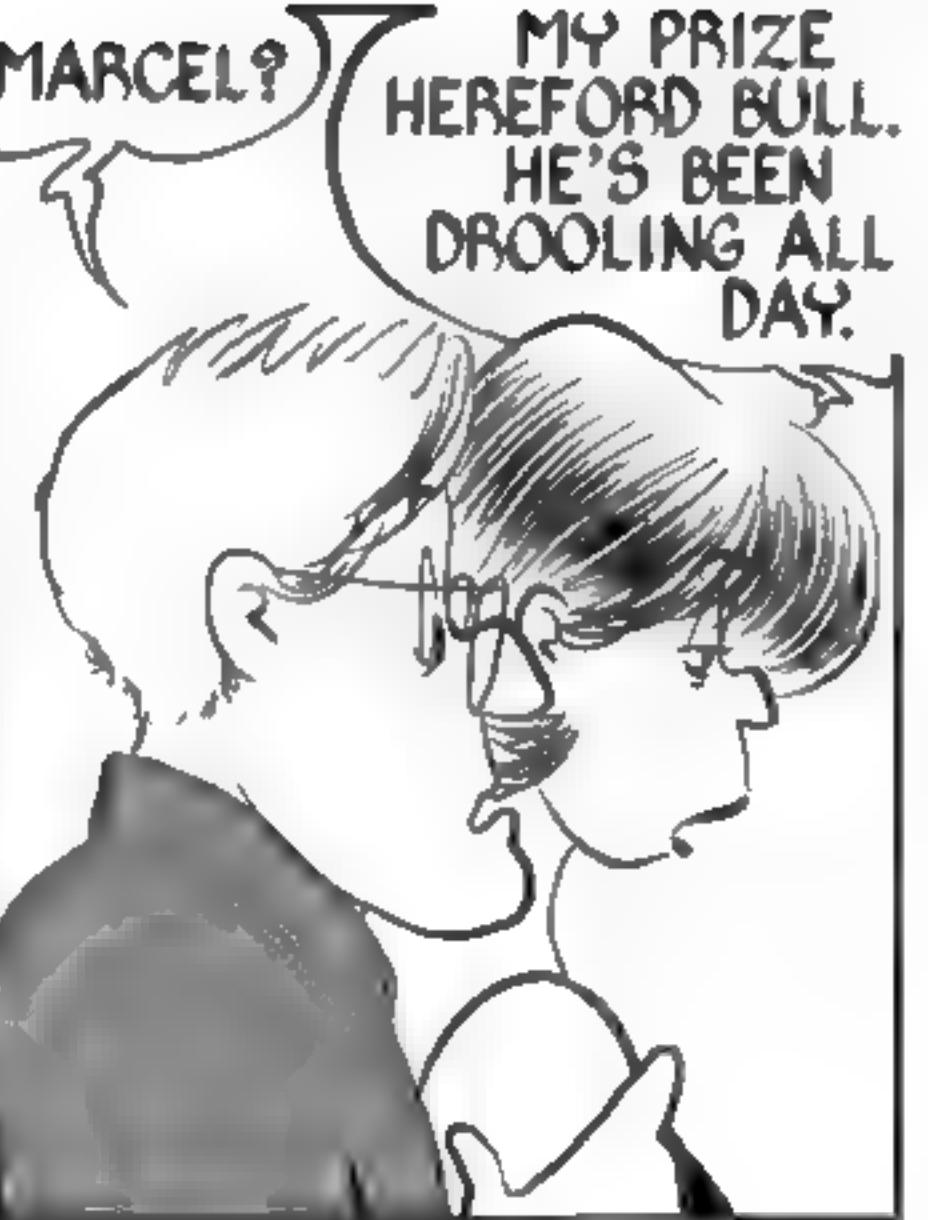


IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT, THAT NEXUS OF EVENTS, THAT I TRANSFORMED INTO THE ZEITGEIST OF A GENERATION, EMBLEM OF AN AGE – THE BUILDER OF A FUNDAMENT UPON WHICH GREAT SKYSCRAPERS OF THOUGHT WOULD RISE AND GORE THE EMPYREAN.

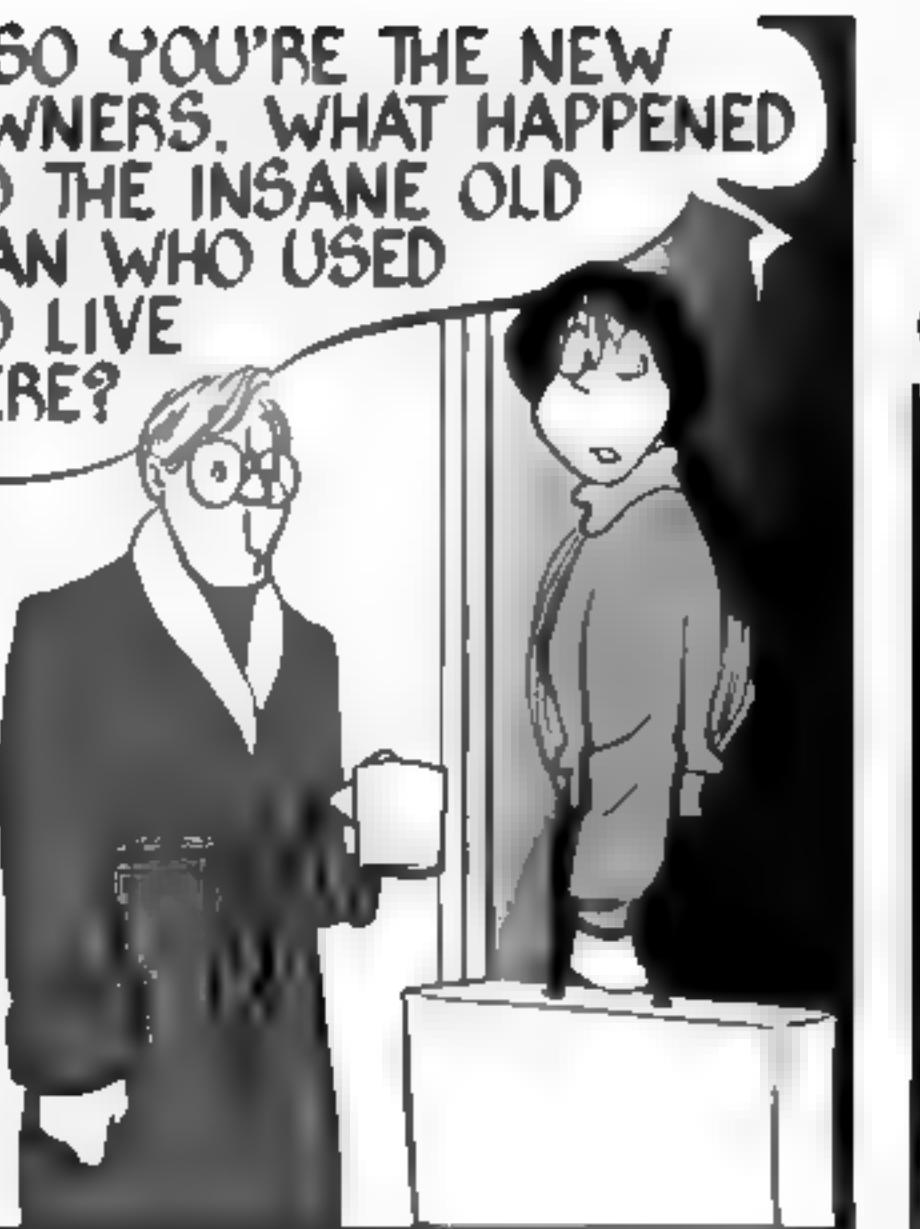


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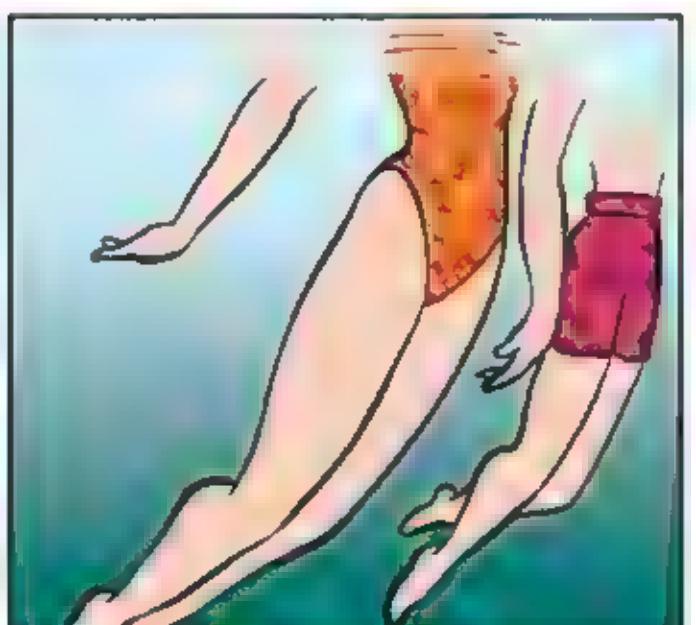
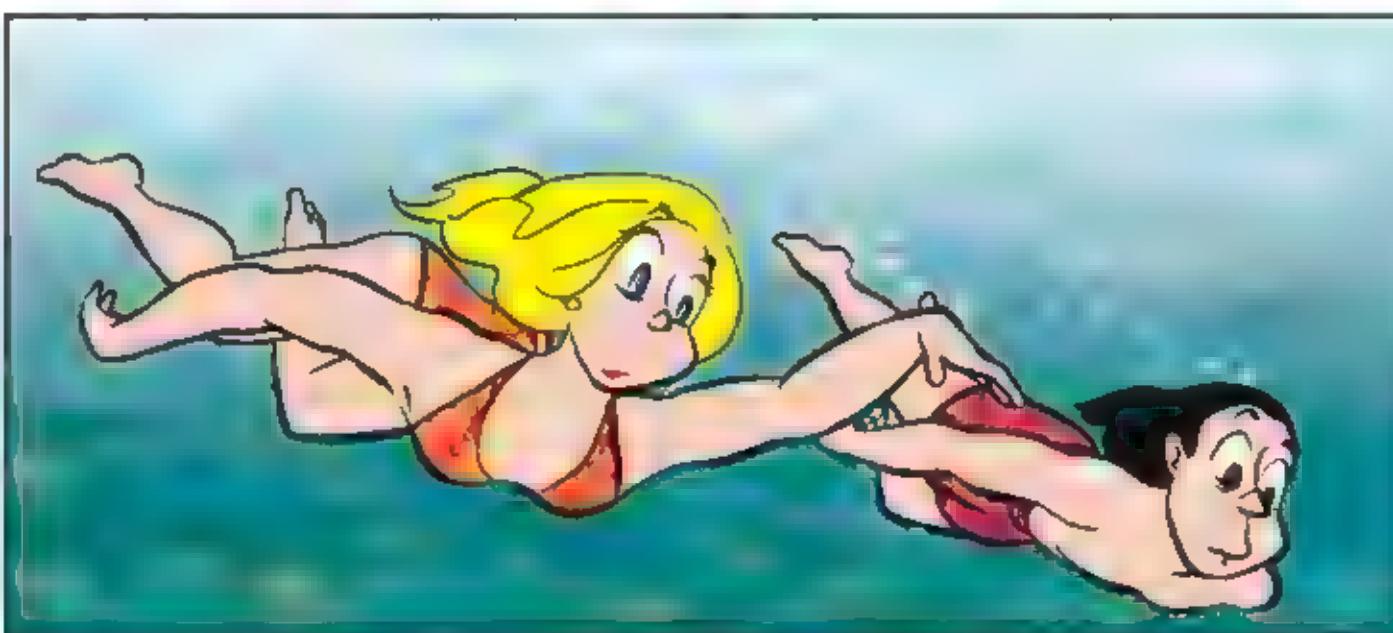




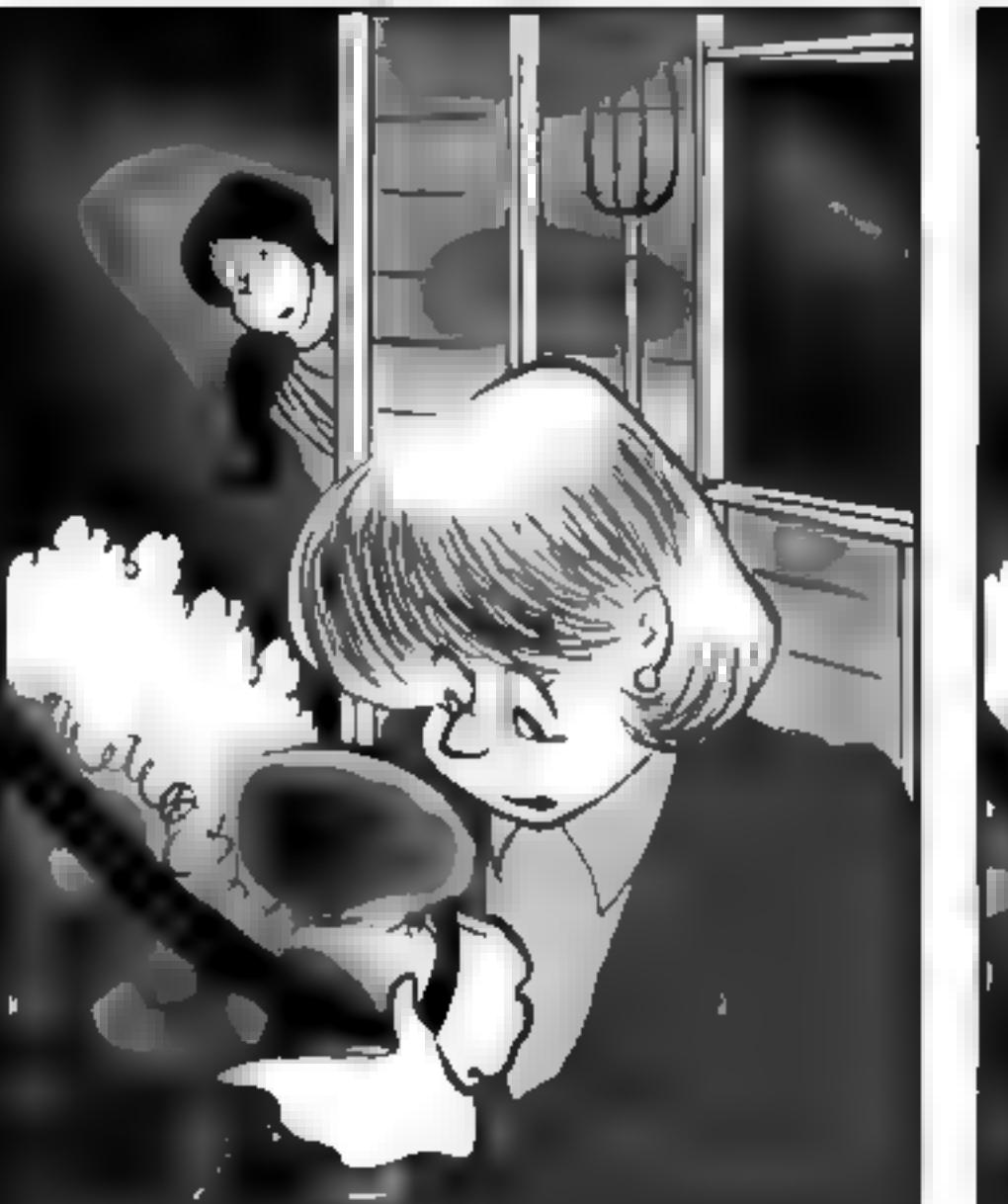


IF YOU WILL PERMIT ME,
OUR CONVERSATION LAPSED
FIVE MINUTES AGO, YET
YOU CONTINUE TO INTER-
MITTENTLY REPEAT THE
WORD "AH" WITH THE
INFLECTION YOU ADOPT
WHEN YOU ARE BEING SUB-
JECTED TO THE LUNATIC
RAMBLINGS OF A POSSIBLY
DANGEROUS
WACKO.







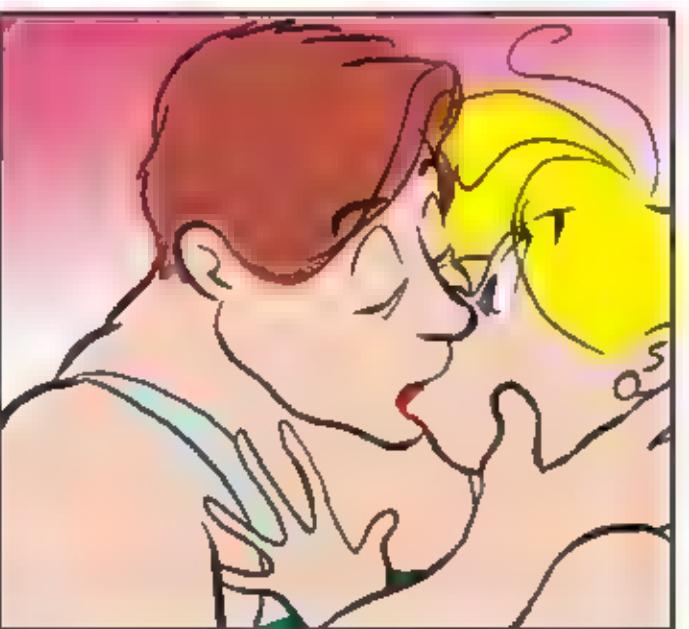
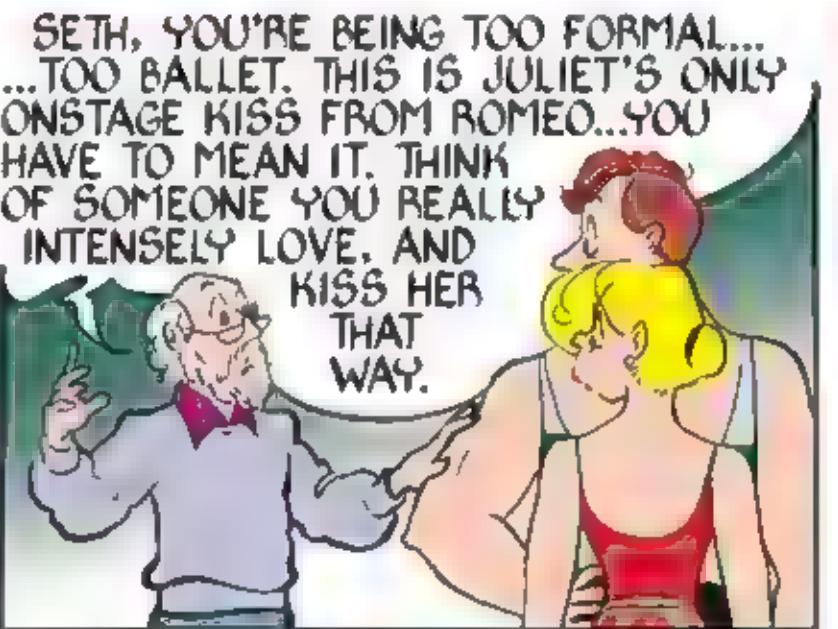












BEFORE YOU DEFEND YOUR PRECIOUS
BULL FROM ME WITH THE AXE OR
SHOVEL OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE
REACHING FOR...

...LET ME POINT
OUT THAT YOU HAVE
A SICK ANIMAL, IT'S THREE
A.M., AND I AM A QUALIFIED VET.









I WONDER
WHERE ELLIOTT
GOT OFF TO.



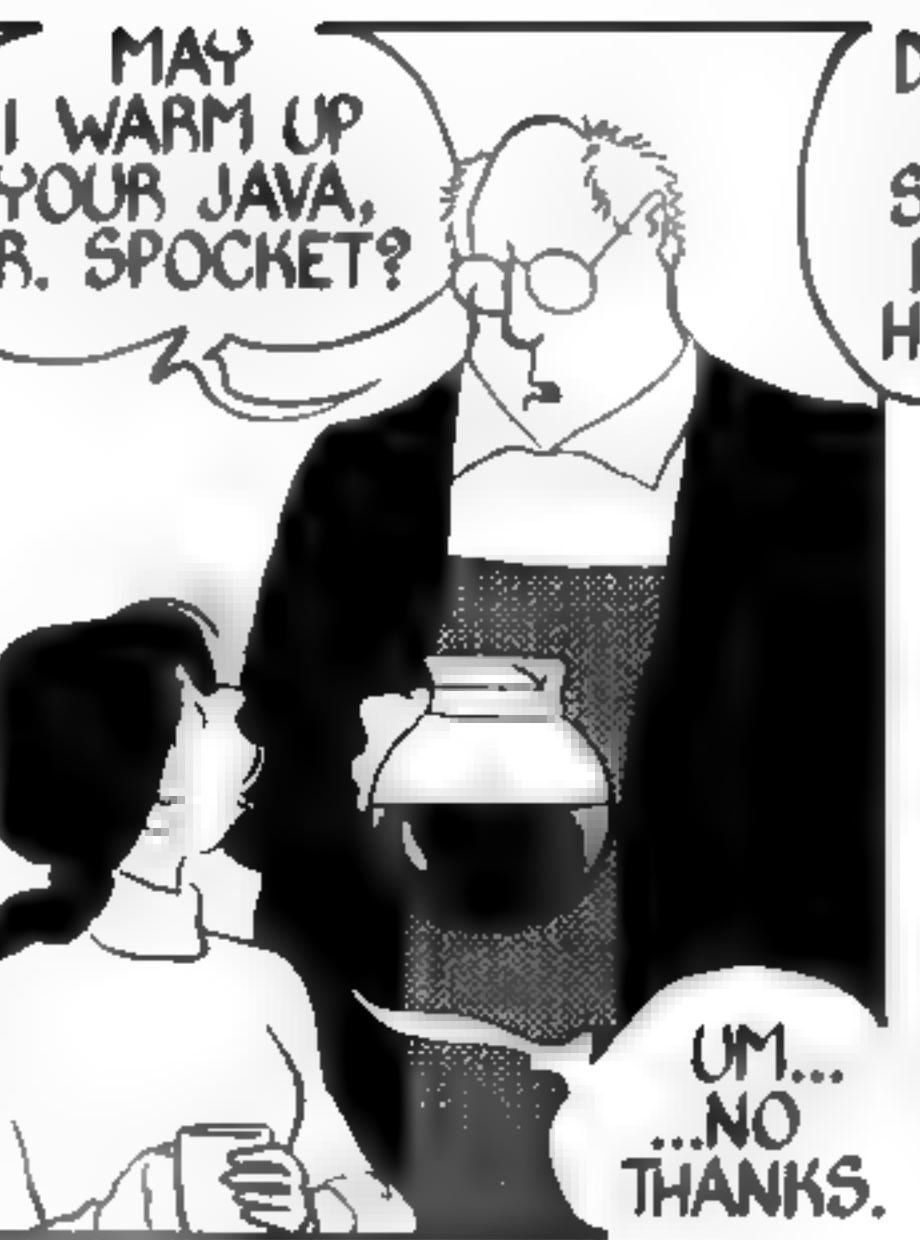
Brooks

HE WENT TO SLEEP AFTER
I READ TO HIM A BRIEF
PASSAGE FROM
“THE HOUSE AT
POOH CORNER.”
I BELIEVE YOU’LL
FIND HIM VERY
REFRESHED IN
THE MORNING.

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MAY
I WARM UP
YOUR JAVA,
DR. SPOCKET?

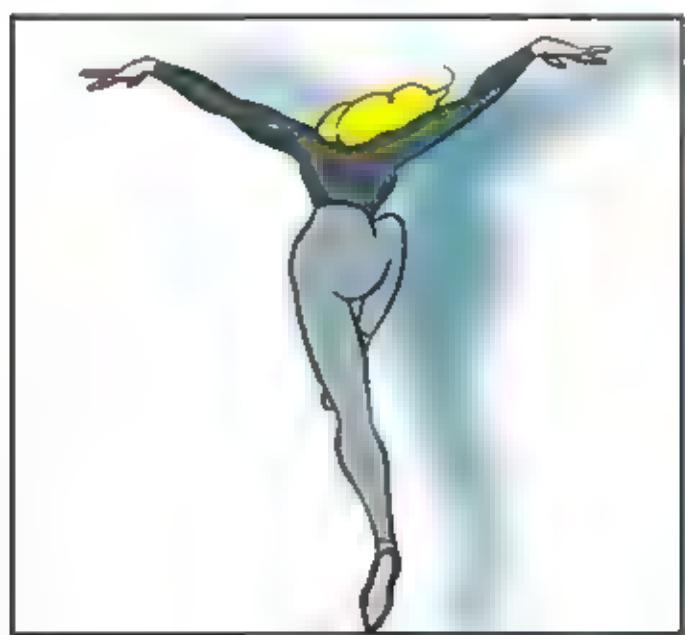
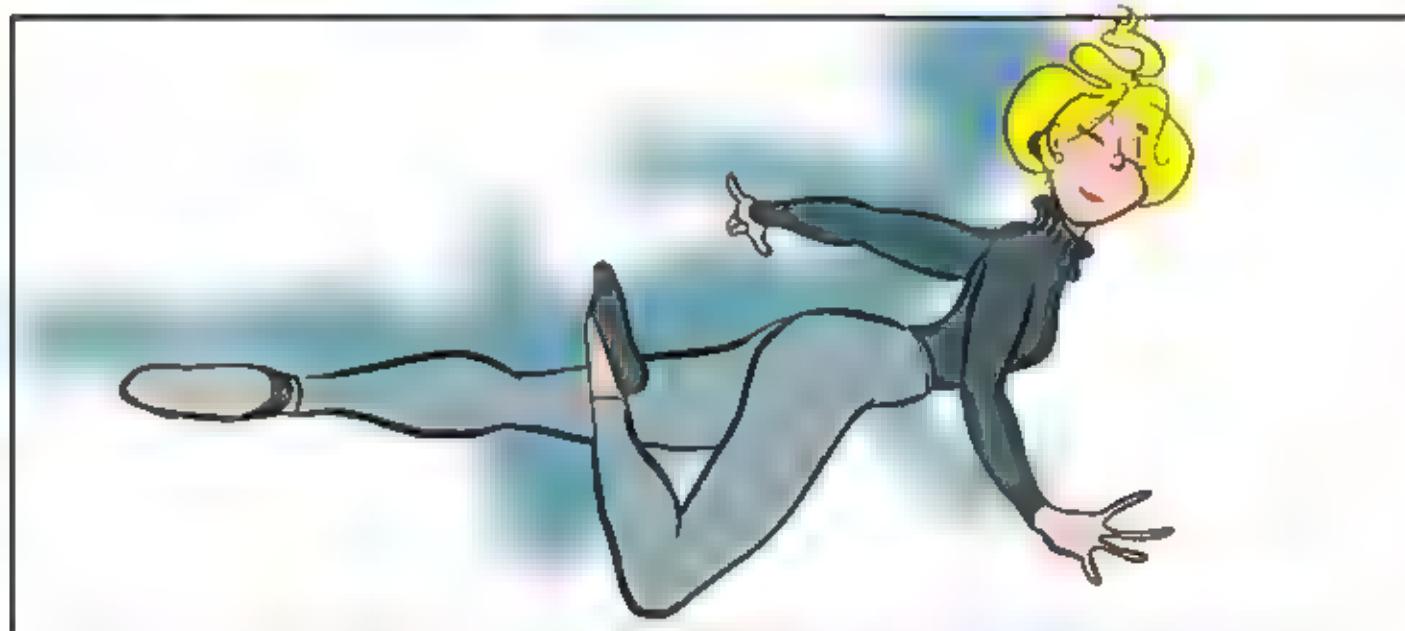


UM...
NO
THANKS.

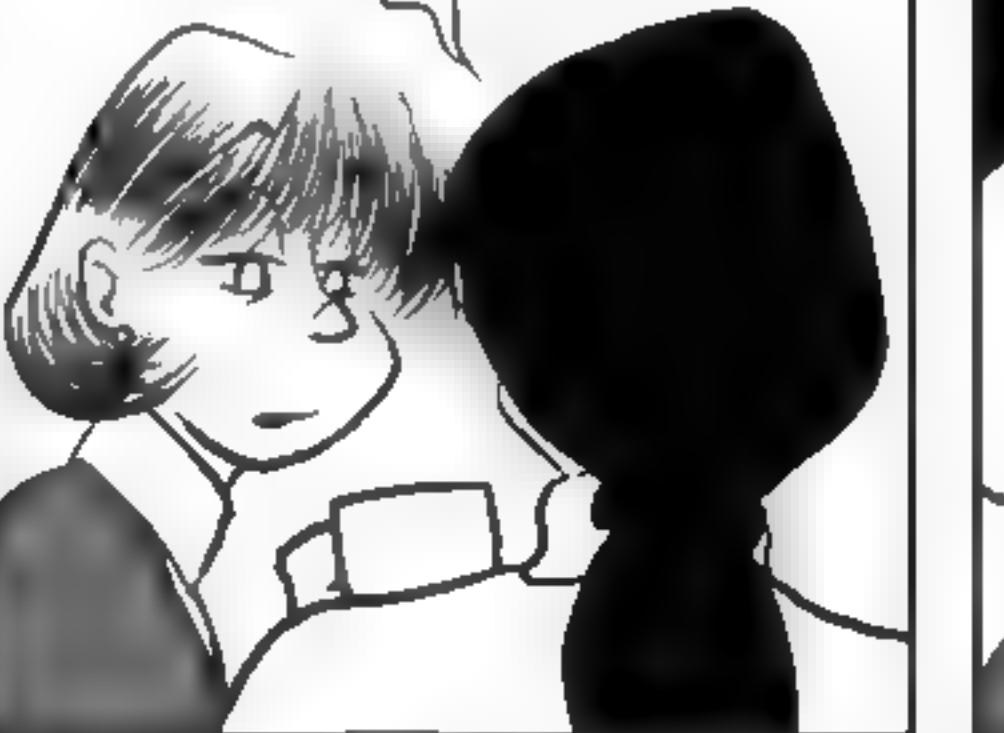
DOES HE
STILL
LIVE
HERE?
NO, BUT NO MATTER
HOW TIGHTLY I LATCH
THE PLACE SHUT, HE
GETS IN. ON THE
PLUS SIDE, HE MAKES
WONDERFUL SOUR-
DOUGH PANCAKES.







FOR ME, YOUR CLASS WAS
A TURNING POINT...IT WAS
AT THAT TIME I REALIZED
I WANTED TO BE A VET.
...THEN YOU NEARLY
FLUNKED ME.



YOU DIDN'T USE A GRADE
CURVE. PREMEDS WERE
WASHING OUT. YOU SAID,
IF WE GOT A's WE'D
KNOW IT WAS
BECAUSE WE
WERE THE
BEST...
...NOT
THE
LEAST
BAD.



THAT WAS
THE KIND
OF VET
I WANTED
TO BE.



AND
ARE
YOU?

BULLS AND
BULLDOGS DON'T
GRADE ON A CURVE.
ADEQUACY ISN'T
AN OPTION.









OKAY, SVEN..YOU'RE GOING
TO NEED TO STRIP TO THE
WAIST FOR THIS JOB.



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10/27

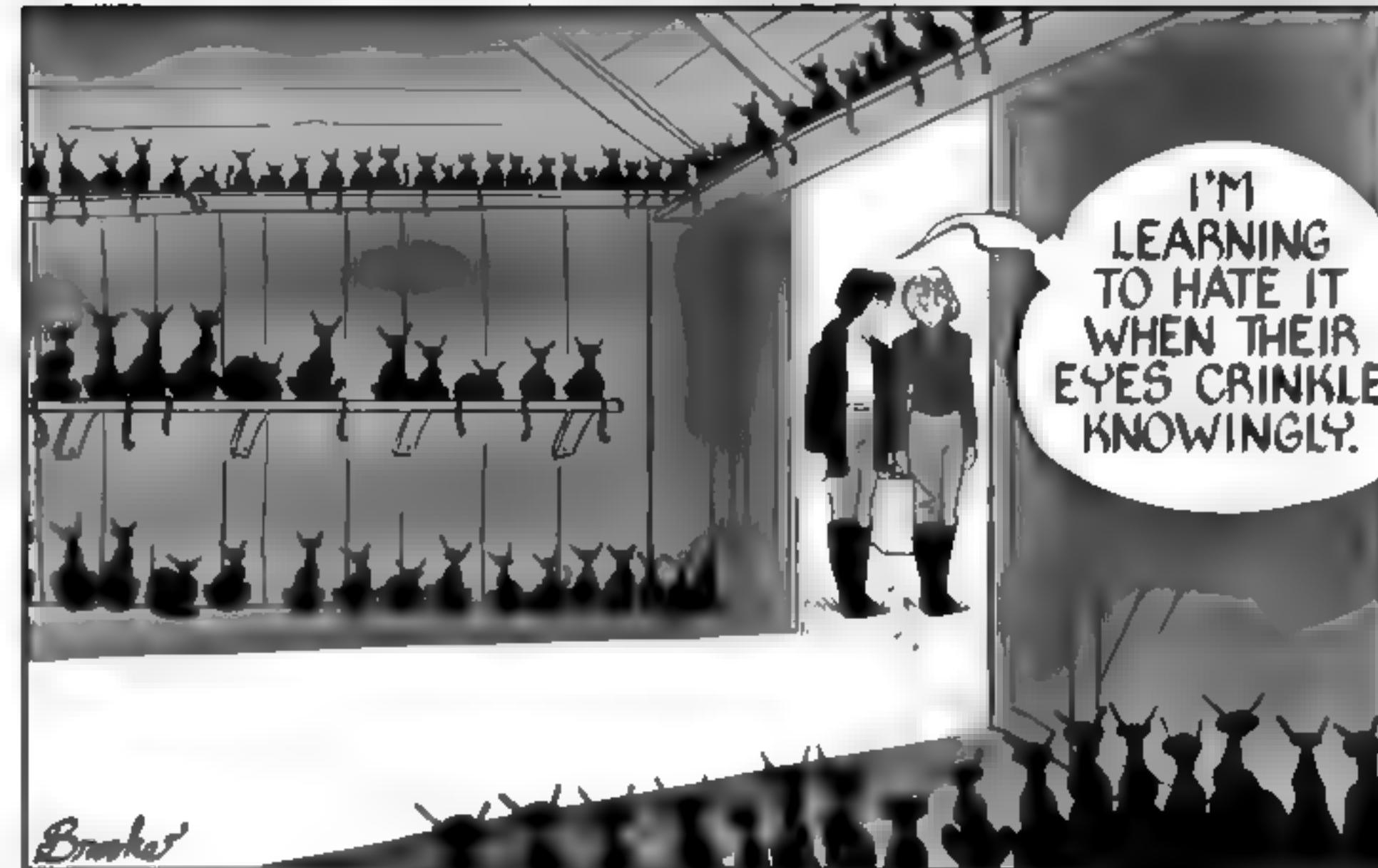


Brooker

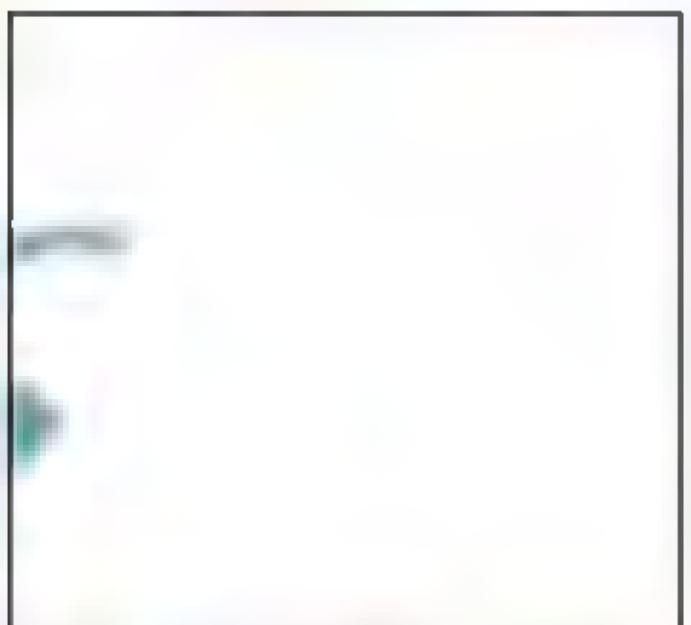
RIGHT...
...YOU CAN
PUT YOUR
SHIRT ON.



MAY I TAKE
THIS MOMENT
TO SAY I LIKE
YOUR STYLE?

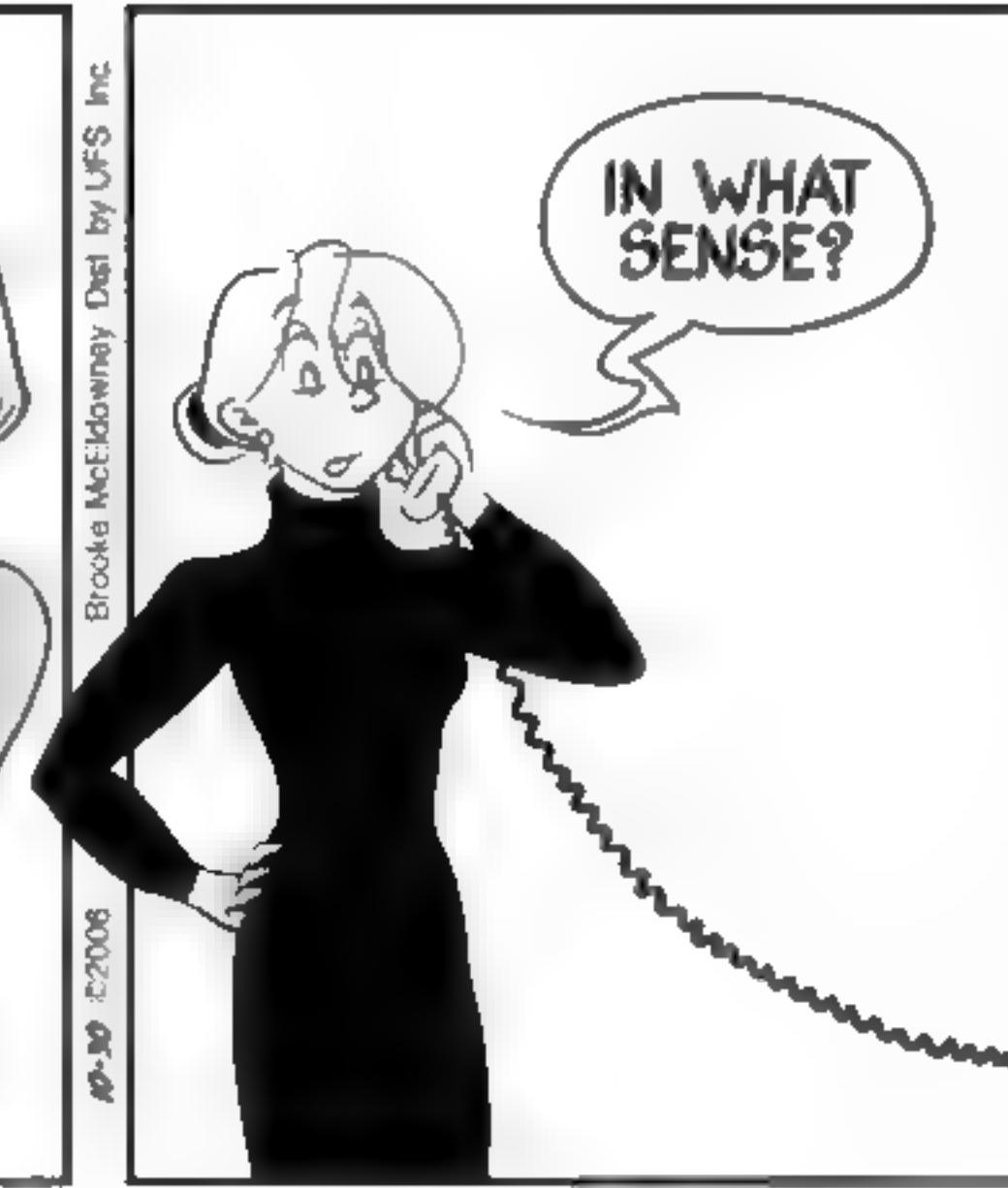


Bruker

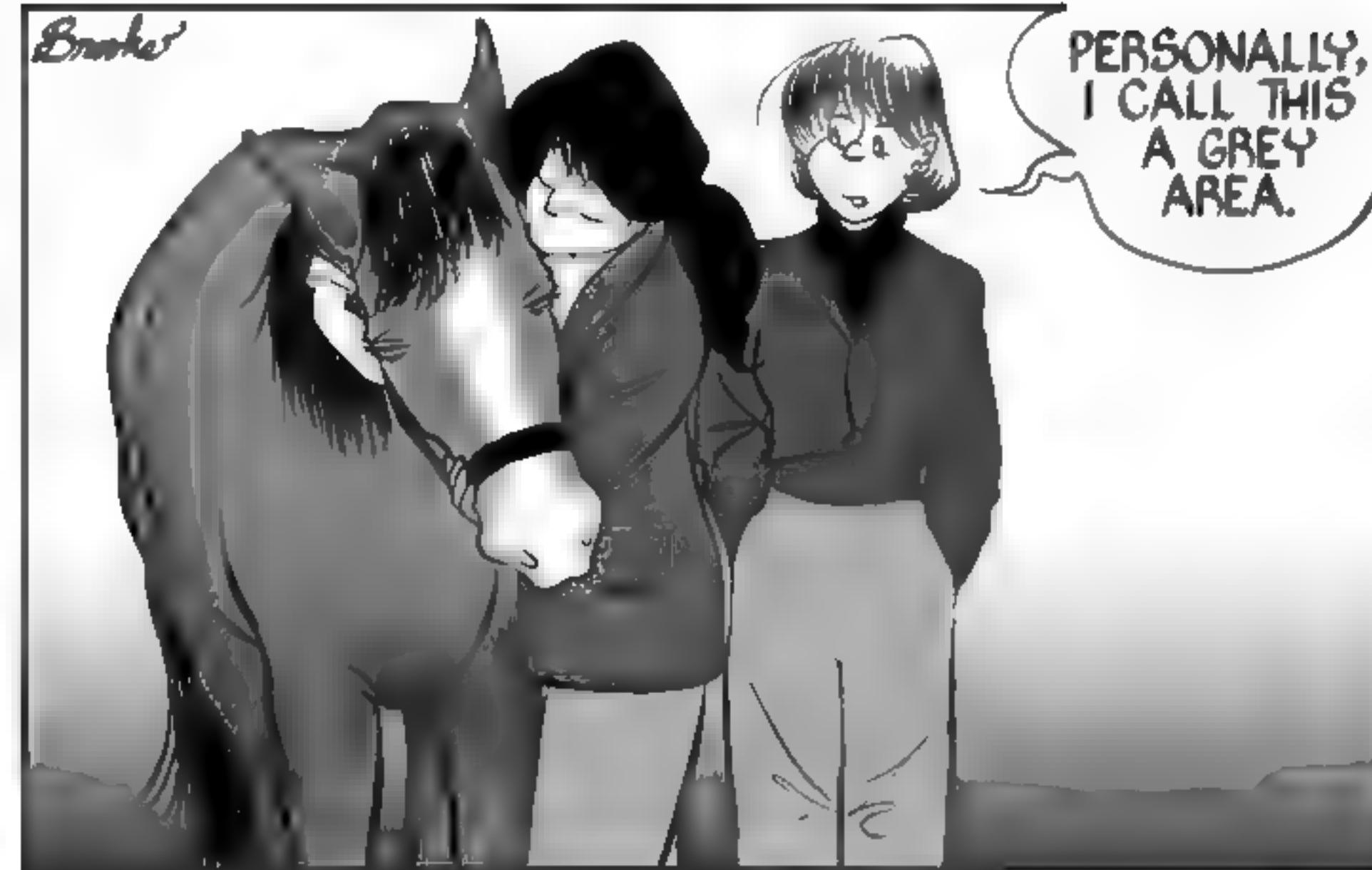


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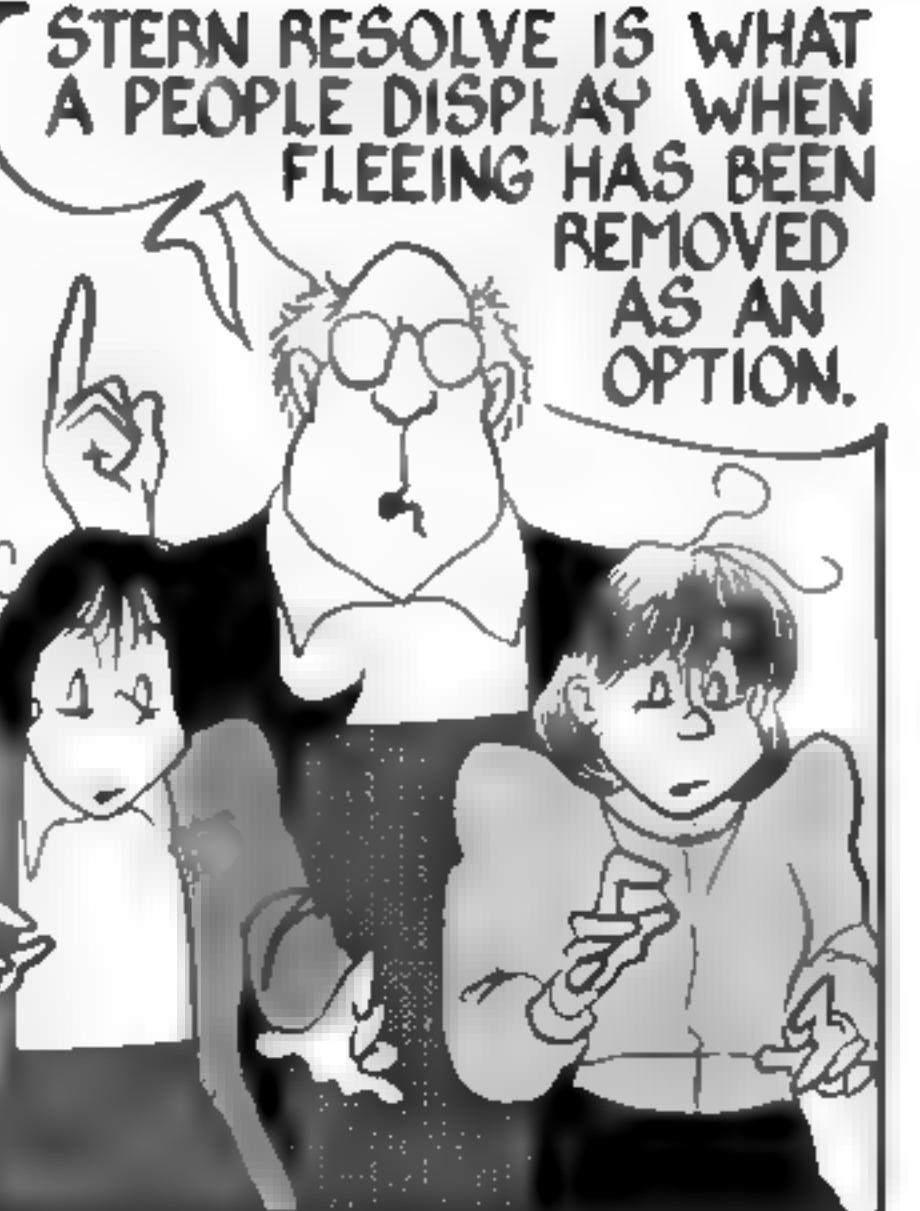


FLEURRIE, THE OWNER JUST ASKED ME
IF WHAT YOU'RE ADMINISTERING
IS MEDICALLY NECESSARY.



I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU
BEAR LIVING HERE WITH THAT
WACKO OLD MAN POPPING
INCESSANTLY OUT OF THE
LANDSCAPE TO BLURT
PITHY NON
SEQUITORS
...THEN
VANISH.

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I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW
THORAX JUST
APPEARS
OUT OF
NOWHERE.

HE SAYS
IT'S VIA A
TIME-SPACE
DISPLACEMENT...

...THROUGH
THE QUANTUM
SINGULARITY
IN THE
TRACTOR
SHED.

YOU
DON'T
REALLY
SWALLOW
THAT,
DO YOU?!

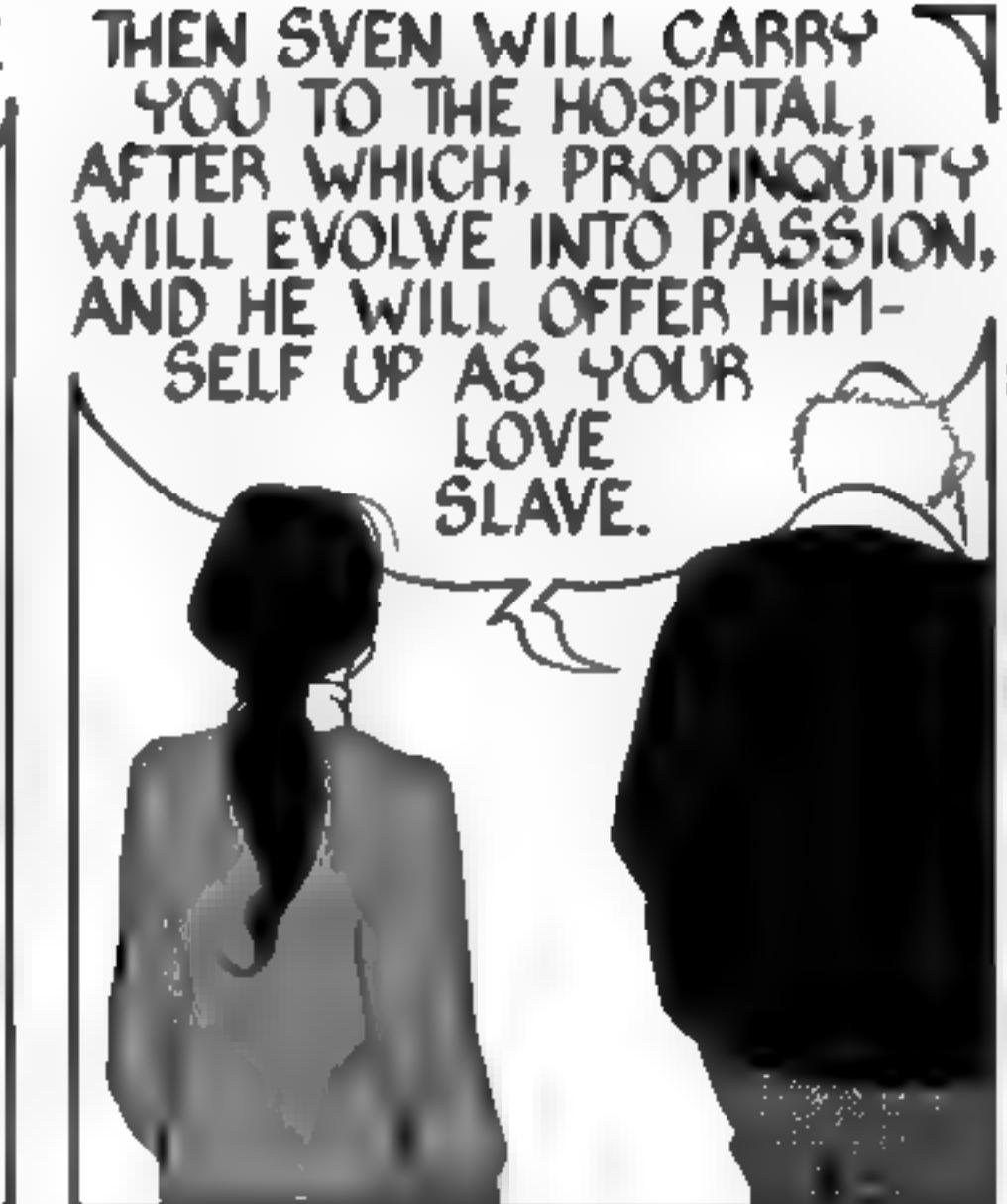
EXCUSE ME, DR. SPOCKET,
YOU DROPPED YOUR
STETHOSCOPE.

I DID!?
WHEN?

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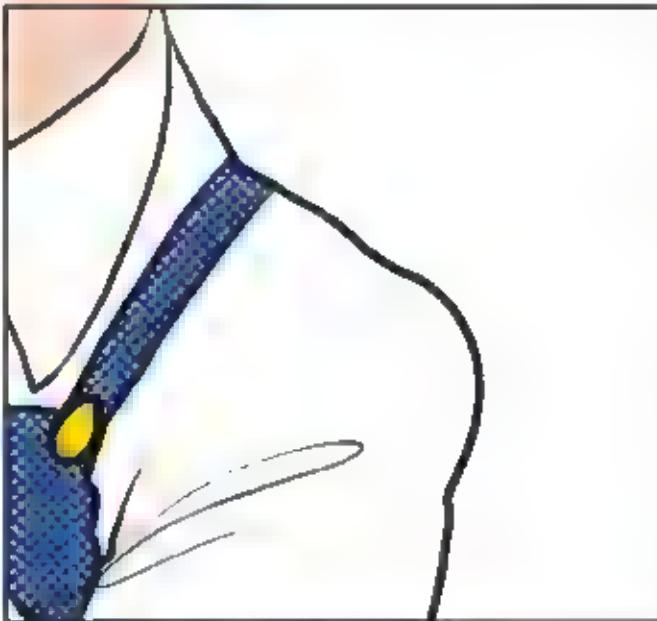
NEXT WEEK...
...RIGHT AFTER
YOU BREAK
YOUR LEG.

Brooks

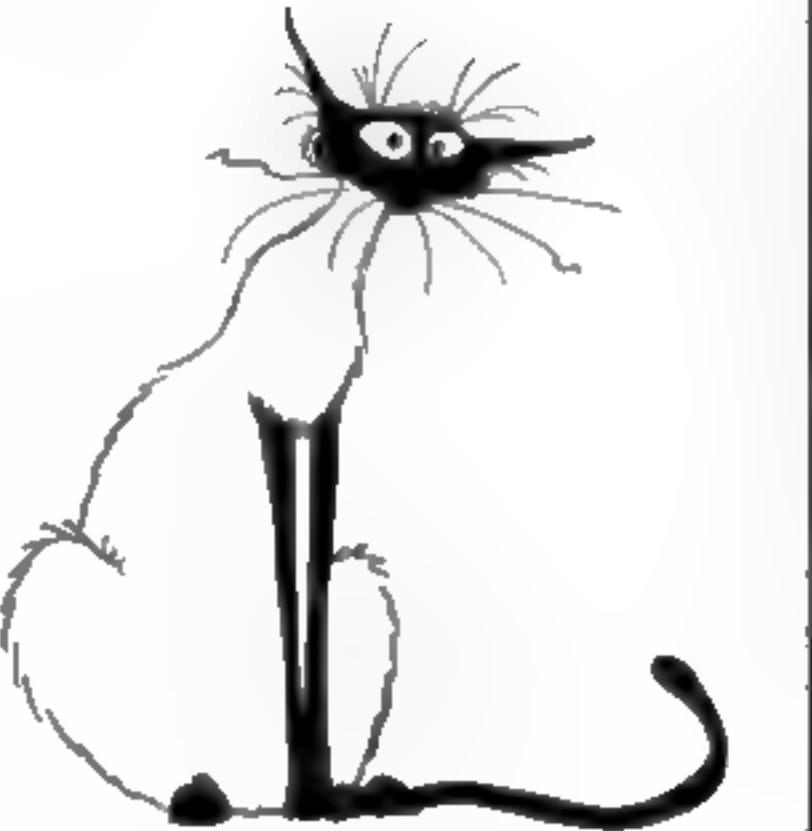


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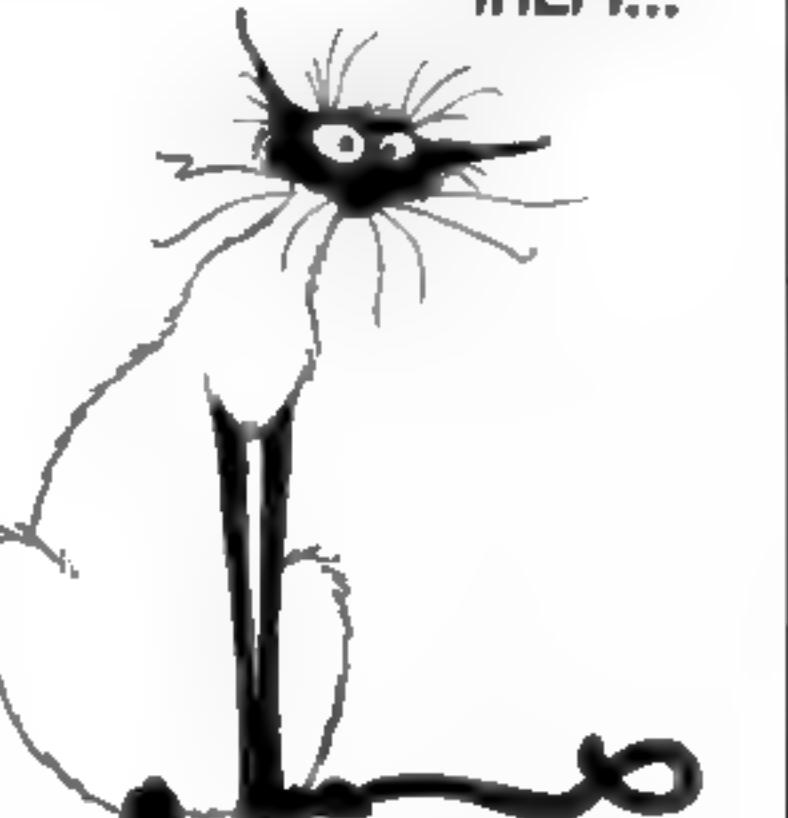


HALLMARKS
OF FELINITY:
THE CAT STARE



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I SEE INTO REALITIES
BEYOND SUCH CONCEPTS
OF TIME AND SPACE AS
HUMANKIND PERCEIVES
THEM...



...GLIMPSE THE GODHEAD,
THE NEXUS OF EXISTENCE,
THE MYSTERY OF CREATION,
THE VERY CORE OF...



Brooke



YOU REALLY
SHOULDN'T HAVE
PREDICTED TO
FLEURRIE THAT
SHE'LL BREAK
HER LEG.



IT WILL
MAKE HER
WARY OF
EVERY MOVE
SHE MAKES.



I DID NOT PREDICT IT.
MY TEMPORAL EXPERIENCE
HAS BEEN REARRANGED.
WHAT IS HER FUTURE
IS MY PAST.



TIME AND EXPERIENCE
REVERSE AND REFLECT
LIKE IMAGES IN A HABER-
DASHER'S MIRROR.

FOR INSTANCE, I CAN SEE
THROUGH THE ORIGAMI-
LIKE FOLDS OF TIME YOU
AND DR. GREENE, JOINED
IN MATRIMONY.



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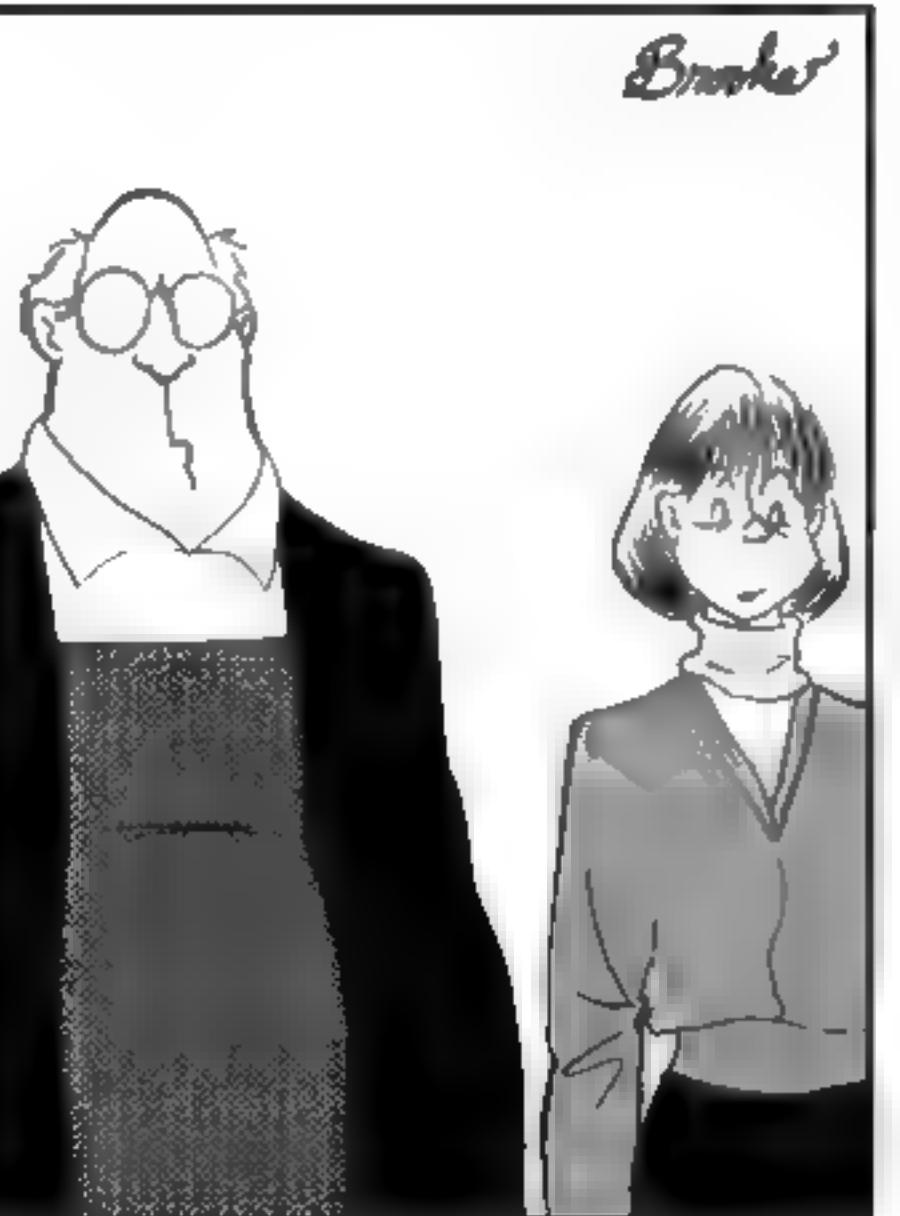
YOU'RE
FORETELLING
SOMETHING THAT
HAPPENED
LAST YEAR.



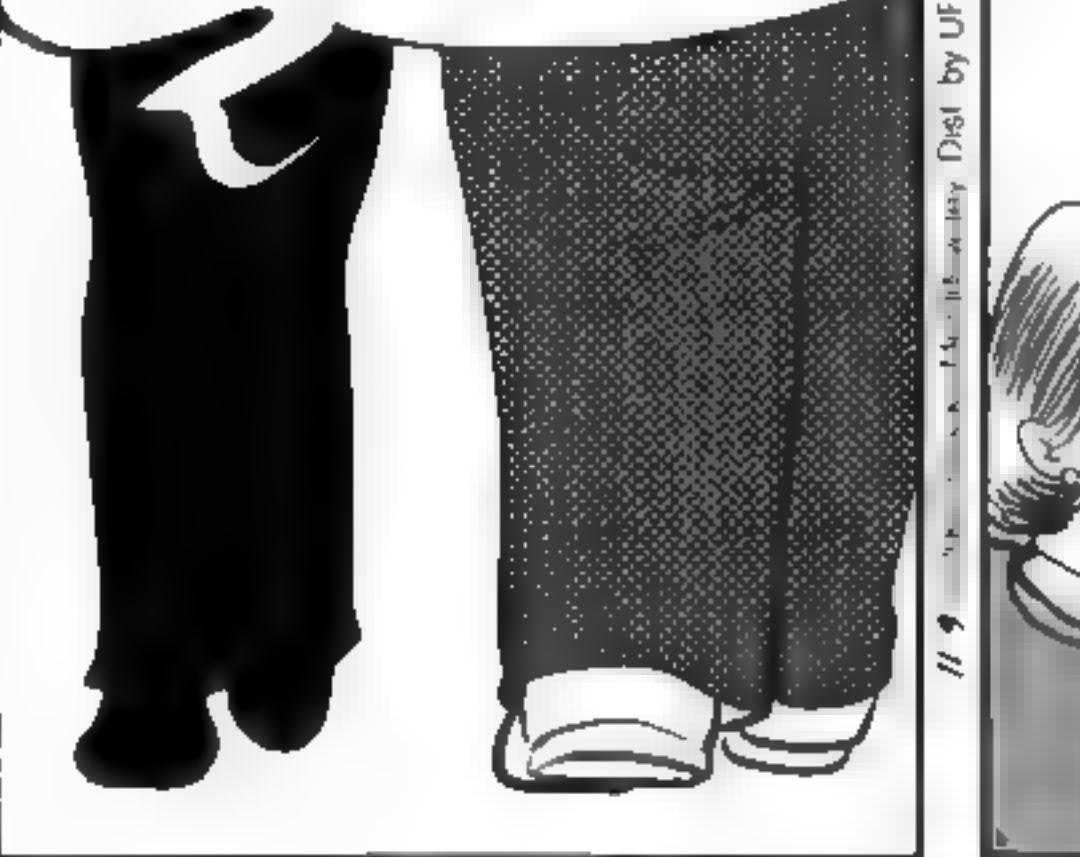
SPOOKY,
N'EST-CÉ
PAS?

YOUR TROUBLE IS, YOU'RE
INSANE. YOU WON'T COME
TO GRIPS WITH
REALITY.

WITH
WHAT
PART OF
REALITY
HAVE YOU
COME TO
GRIPS, DR.
BURBER?



WHAT YOU NEED IS SOMETHING CONSTRUCTIVE TO DO. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU DO THESE DAYS, NOW THAT YOU'VE SOLD THE FARM?



THORAX IS THE VOICE IN ALL THOSE ADS, THE ONE THAT SAYS, "VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW."

WHO CARES?

I HAVE THE WHOLE AFTERNOON OFF...LET'S DO SOMETHING TOGETHER.

WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

I COULD MAKE ONE OR TWO WHISPERED SUGGESTIONS...

VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW.

DID I MENTION THAT HE TAKES HIS JOB VERY SERIOUSLY?

Origin of the Species



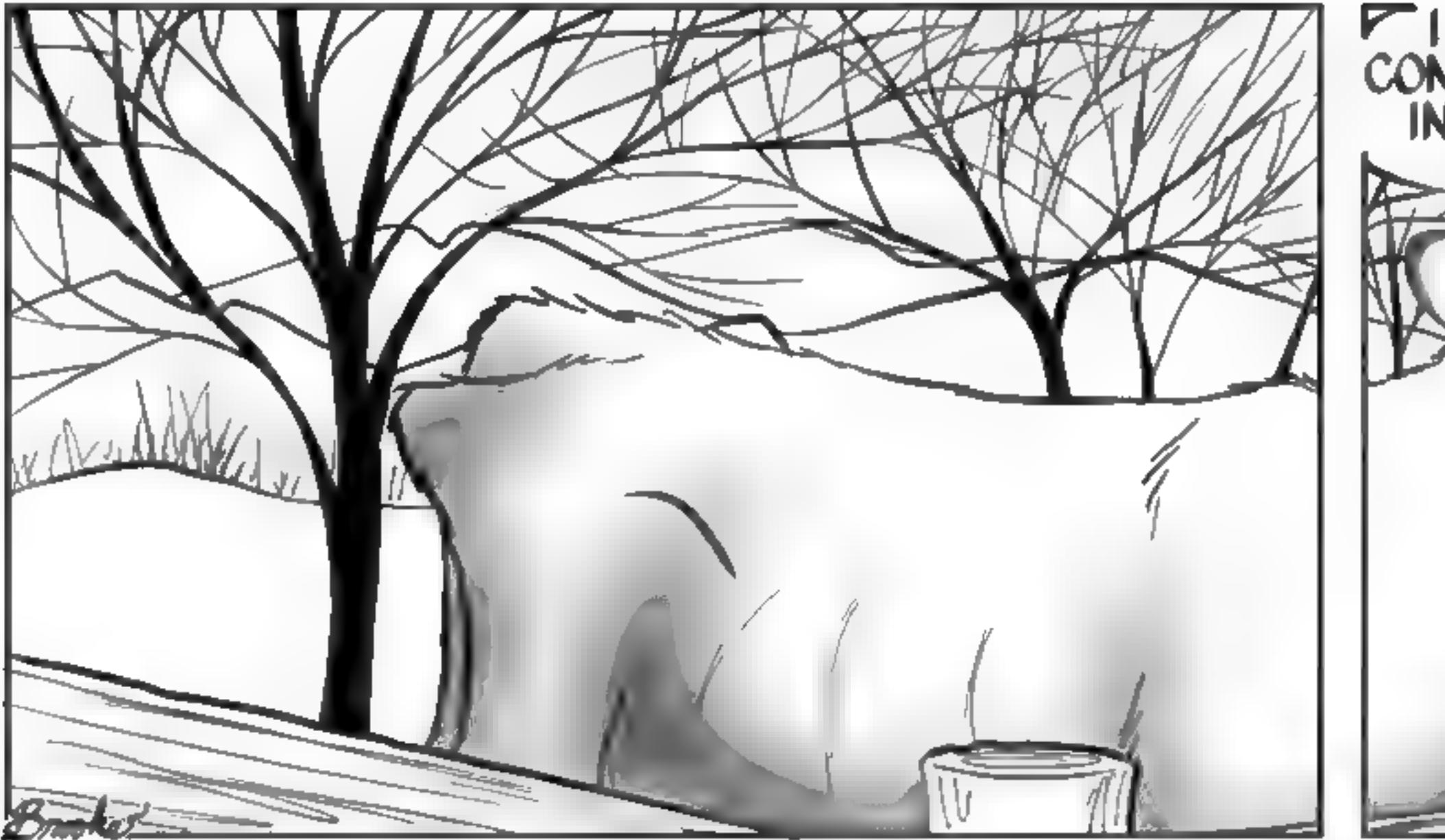
Brooks

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I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT NO MATTER WHAT KIND OF CONDITIONER I BUY, OUTDOOR WORK GIVES ME THE MOST INCREDIBLE FRIZZIES.





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PERHAPS IF THORAX'S AUGURY MAKES YOU UNCOMFORTABLE, YOU SHOULD CALL IN SICK AND JUST STAY HERE UNTIL THE WEEK IS OVER. EVERYBODY LIKES YOU...EVEN MARCEL.



MARCEL LIKES ME?

HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED HOW HE RUBS THE FENCE WHEN YOU WALK BY? MARCEL IS A GREAT BIG, UNRESTRAINED, LOVING BEAST... ...A LITTLE LIKE A CAT.

Brooke



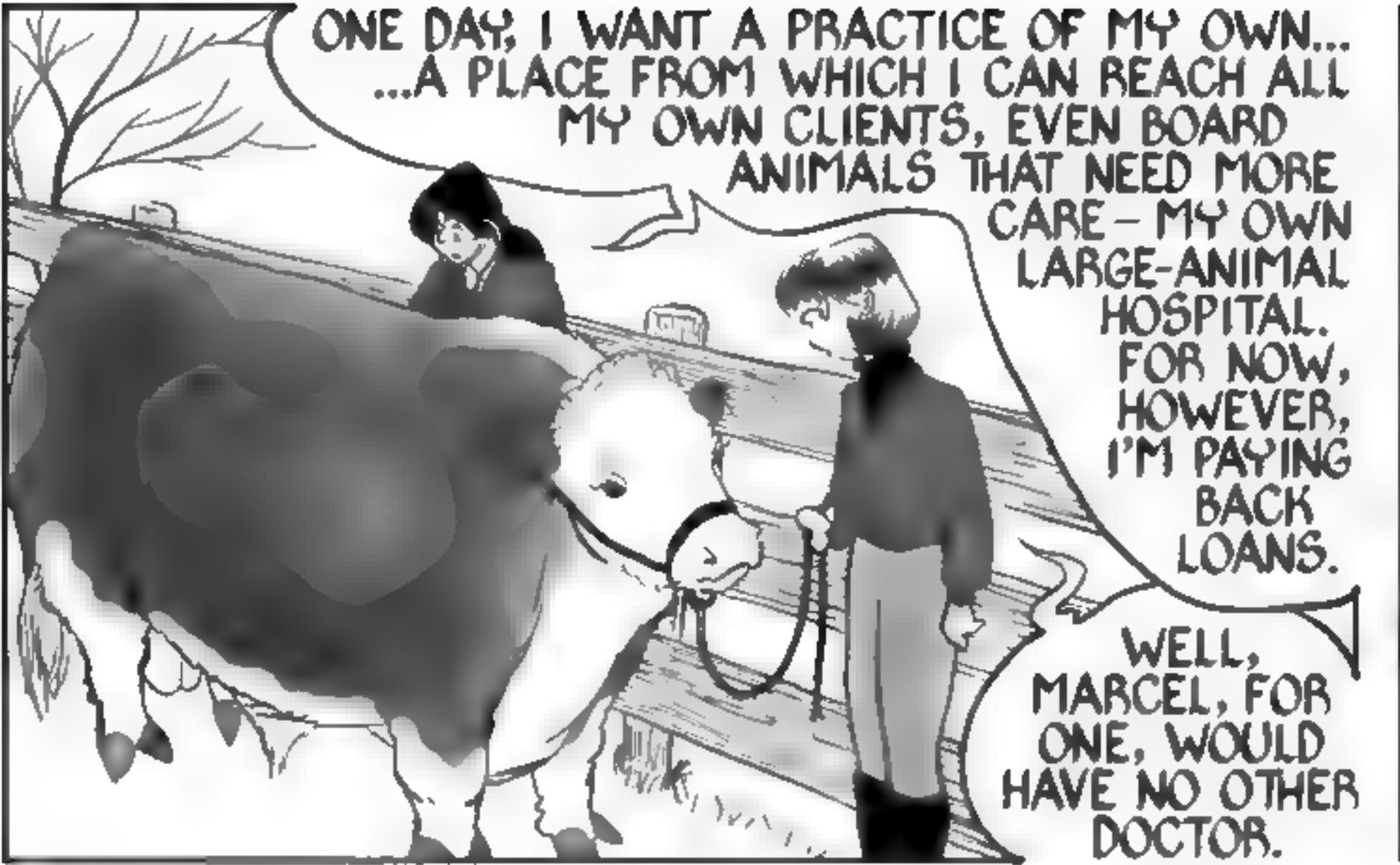
I WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME FOR SVEN.

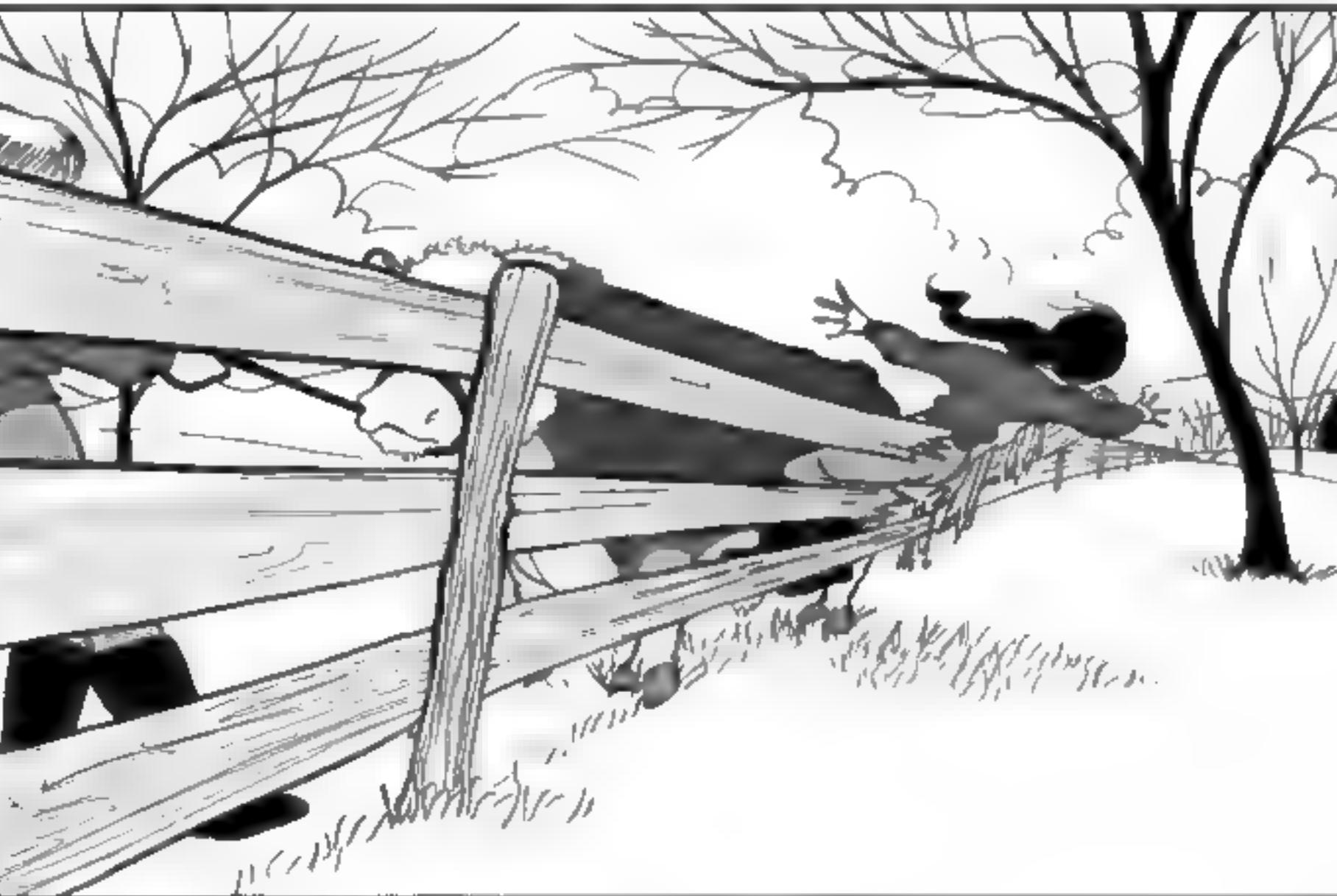
THAT HE'S LIKE A CAT?

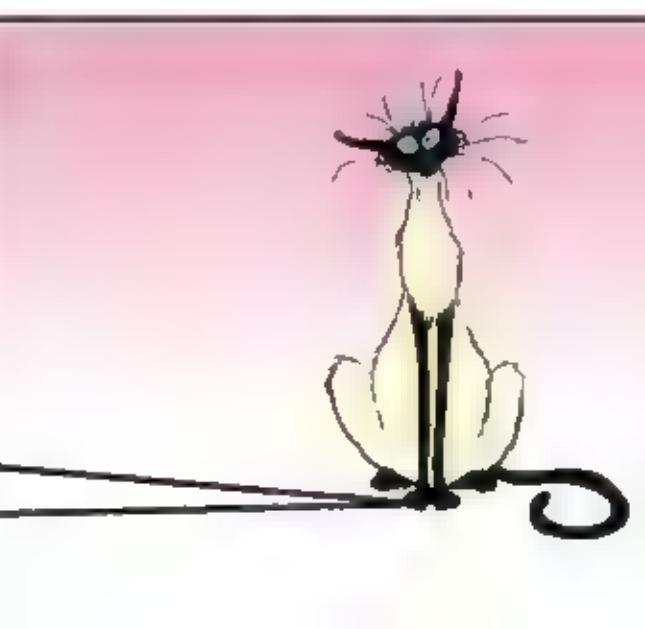
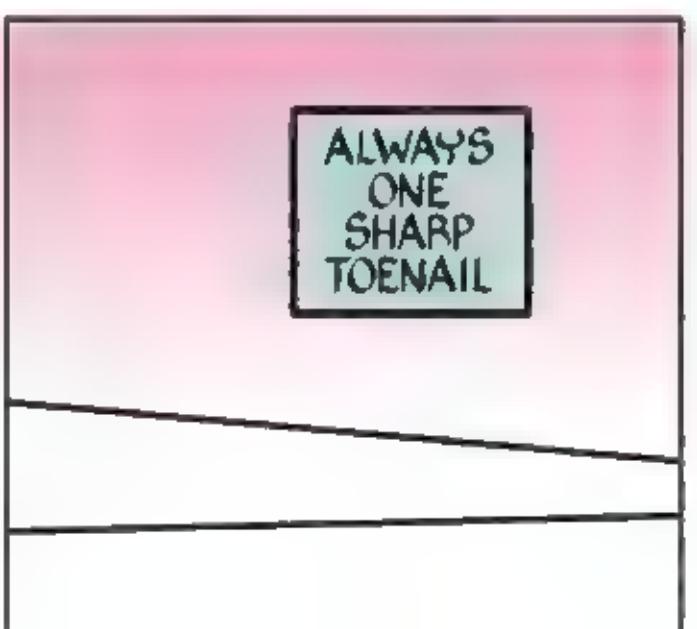
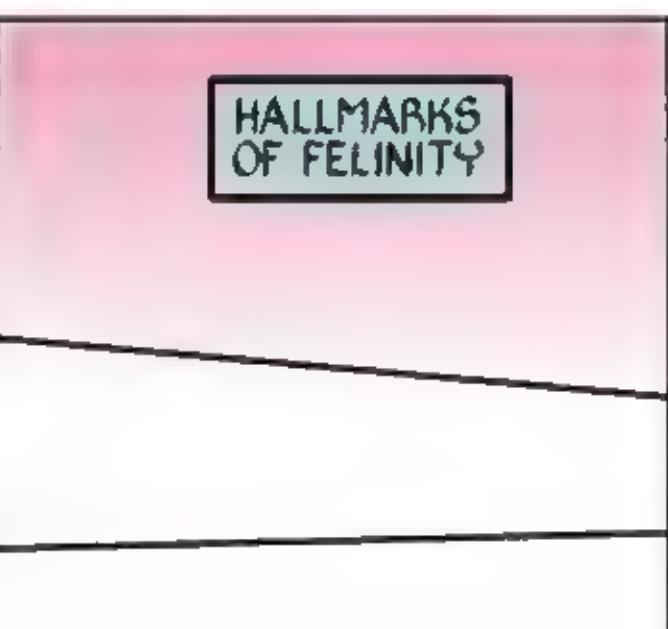
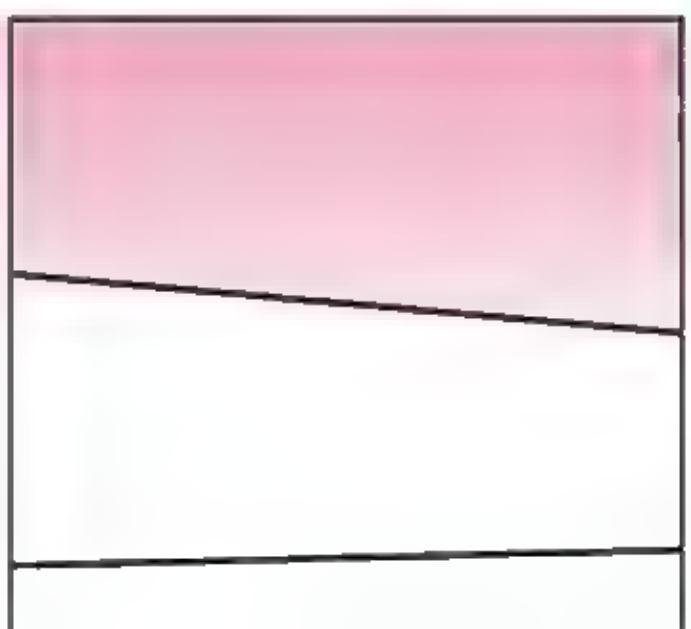
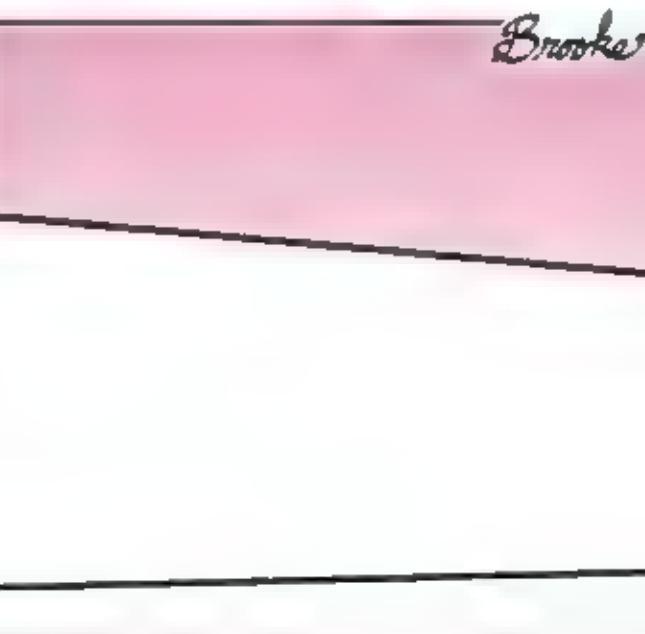
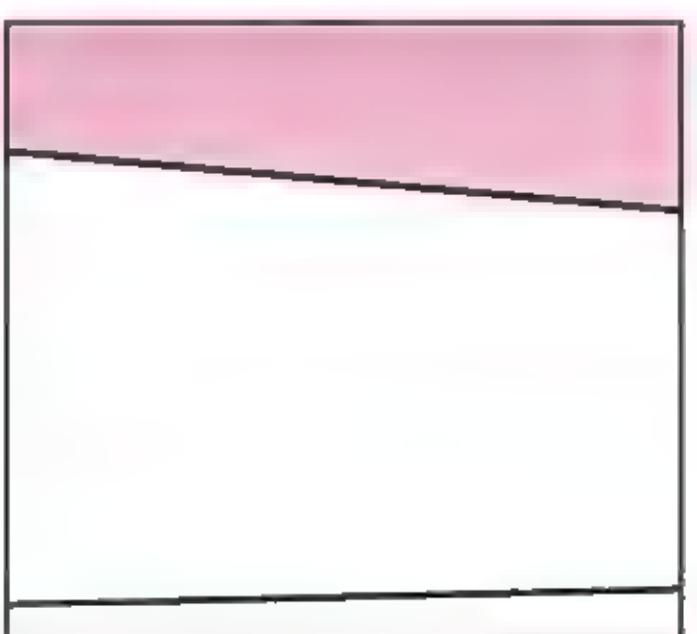
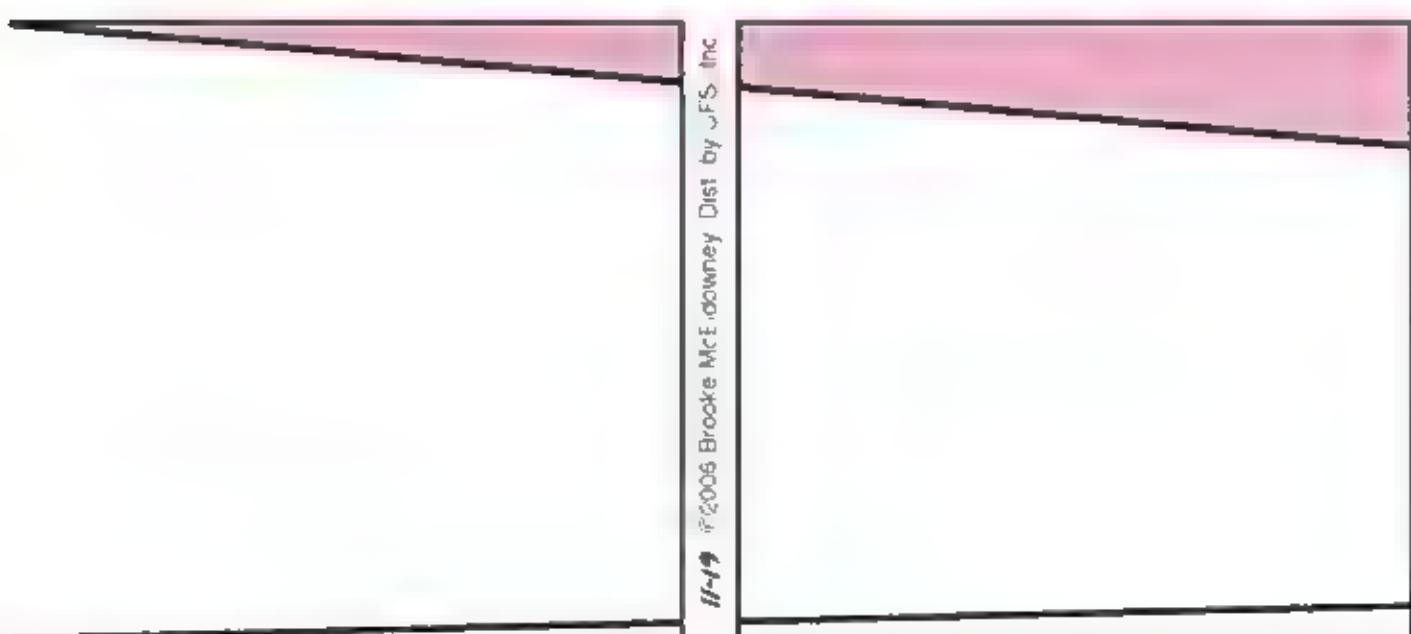


NO...THAT HE'S AN UNRESTRAINED, LOVING BEAST.

HOLD ON... ...I NEARLY STEPPED ON MY TONGUE.











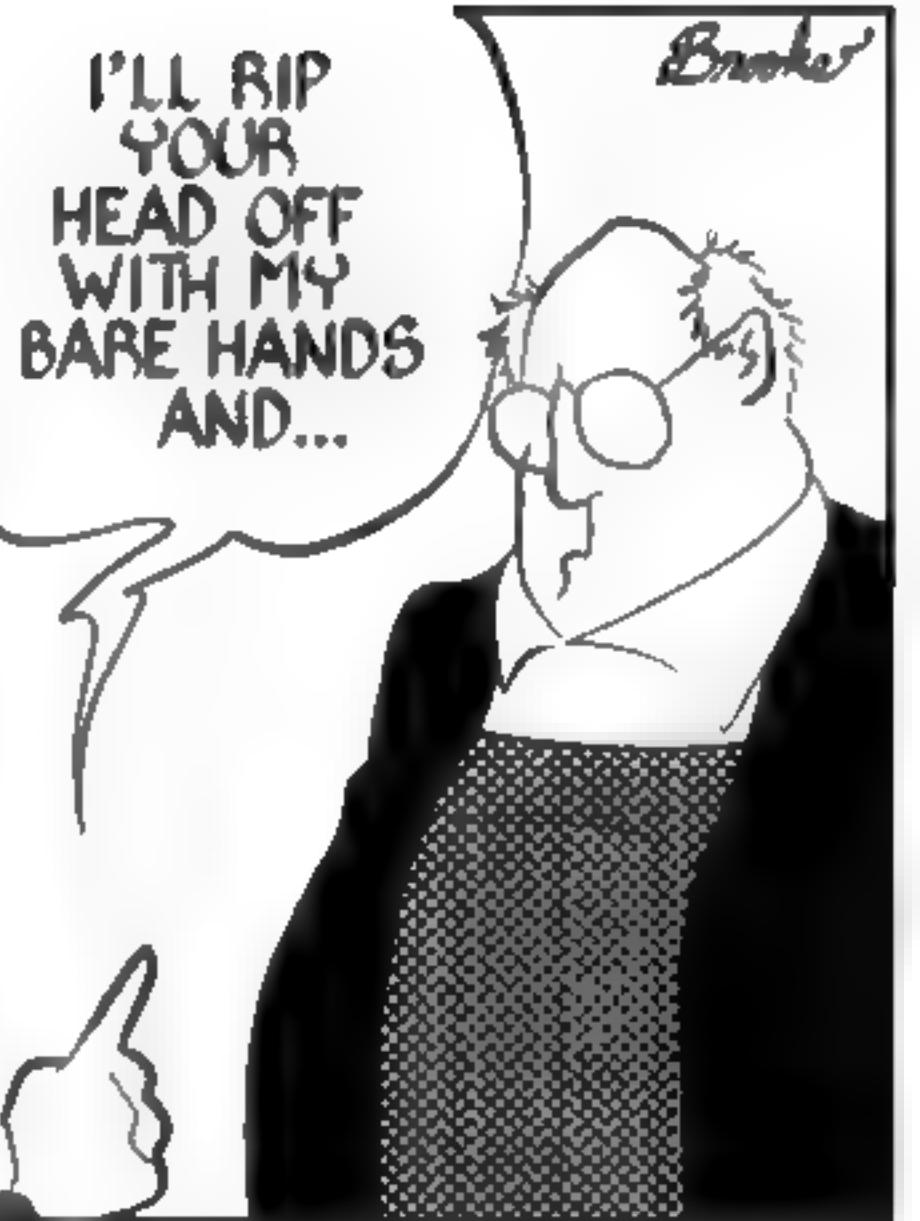
FLEURRIE!
OPEN YOUR
EYES!

YOU JUST FELL
ASLEEP. I WANT
YOU TO STAY
AWAKE. YOU
MAY HAVE BEEN
CONCUSSSED.

THEY CALL NEW HAMPSHIRE
“THE GRANITE STATE.”
YOU NEVER NOTICE HOW
TRUE THAT IS UNTIL
YOU HIT
YOUR
HEAD
ON IT.

Brooks'







I'M HAVING A LITTLE ARGUMENT WITH SVEN. HE'S DETERMINED TO CARRY YOU BACK, AND I KEEP TELLING HIM THAT IT IS CRITICAL FOR YOU TO REMAIN IMMOBILE.



EXCEPT IN THE MOST HAZARDOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, AN INJURED PERSON SHOULD NEVER BE MOVED.

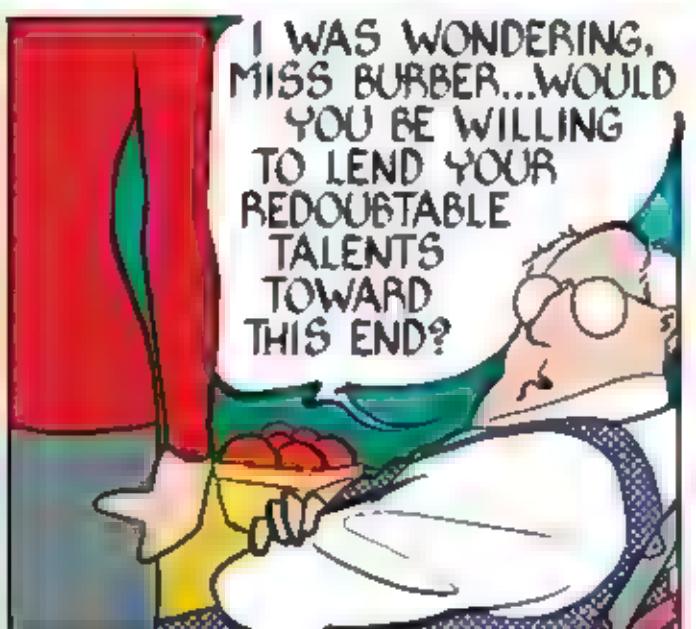


THE LAST THING WE NEED SVEN DOING IS GATHERING YOU UP IN HIS ARMS AND...

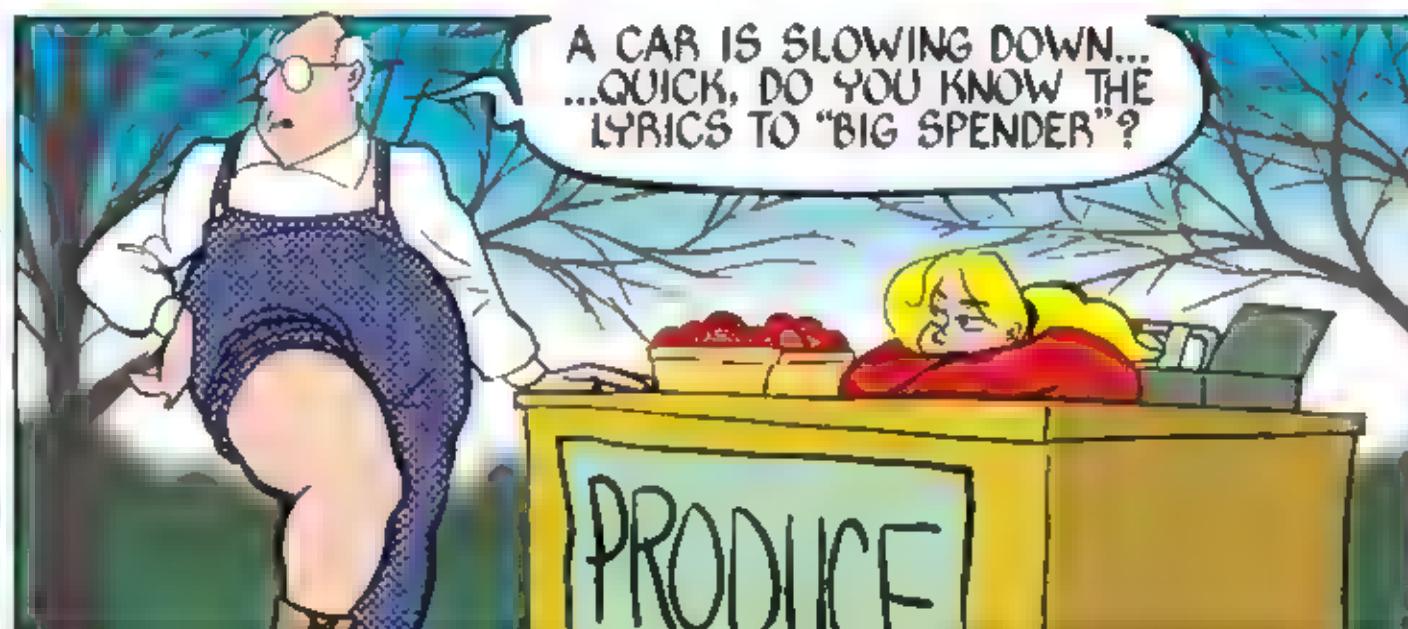


Broker
WILL YOU MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS!





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MY BOSS TOLD ME I'M NOT MUCH GOOD NOW EXCEPT TO ANSWER THE TELEPHONE, AND THAT ANYBODY WHO WOULD SANDWICH HERSELF BETWEEN A BULL AND A FENCE THE WAY I DID PROBABLY ISN'T COMPETENT TO DO THAT.

NOT AWFULLY CHARITABLE. WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I CALLED HIM A SLAVERING CRETIN AND A BOTTOM FEEDER WITH CHRONIC HALITOSIS.

AS I REPLAY THE MOMENT, I HAVE TO ADMIT...
...THAT WAS
A MISTAKE.

Brooke

...A LOVELY, DELICIOUS, SATISFYING MISTAKE.

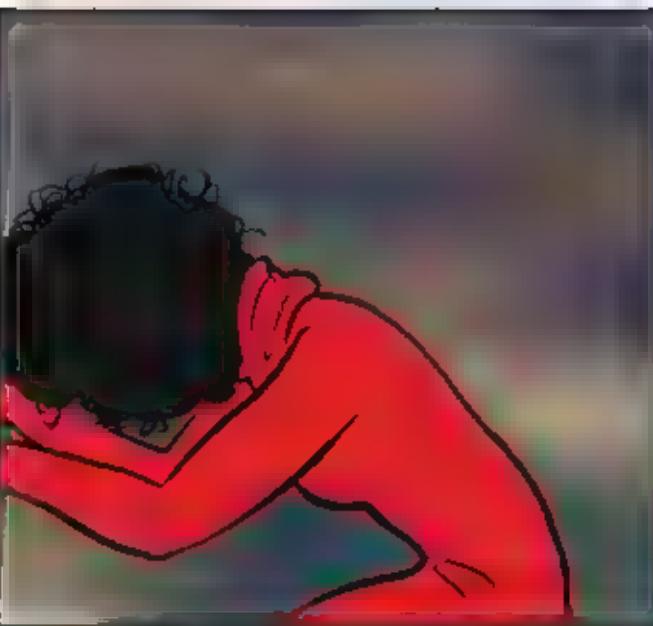
BEFORE MARCEL USED YOU
TO BATTER DOWN THE
FENCE, YOU TOLD ME THAT
YOU'D LIKE TO HAVE YOUR
OWN PRACTICE SOME DAY.







®





Brooks



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Brooke

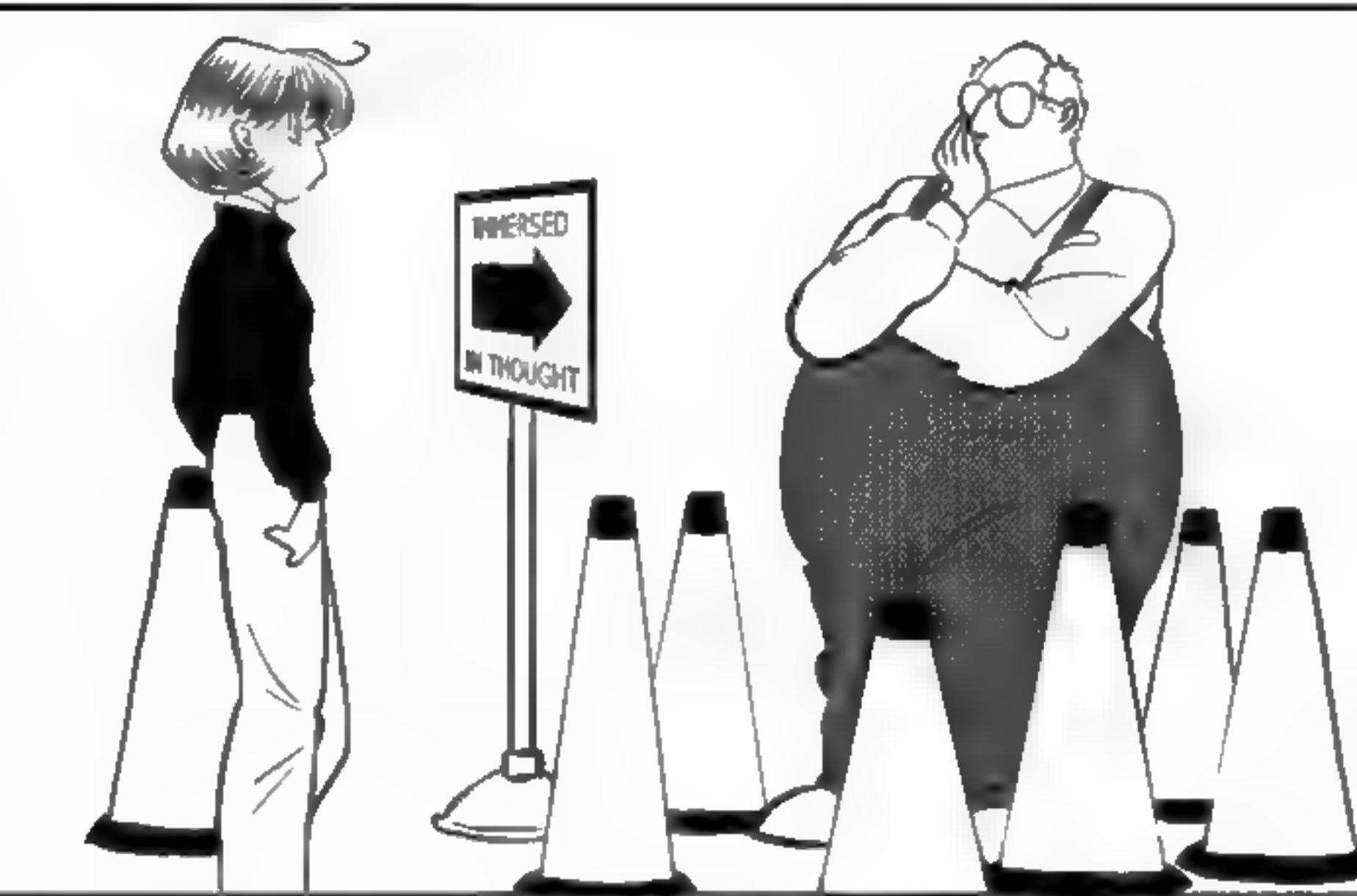
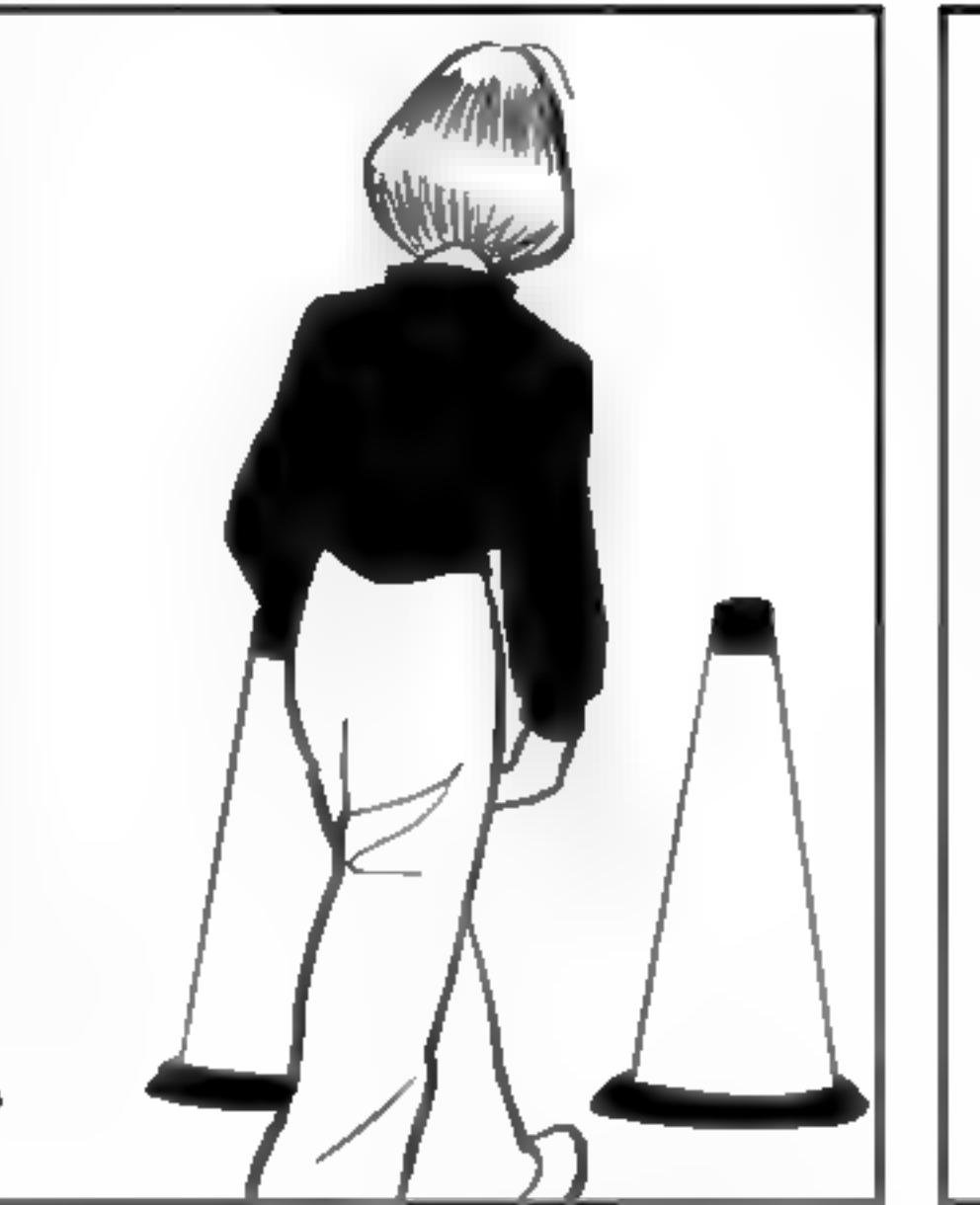
MEDITATIONS
OF
THORAX

Brock

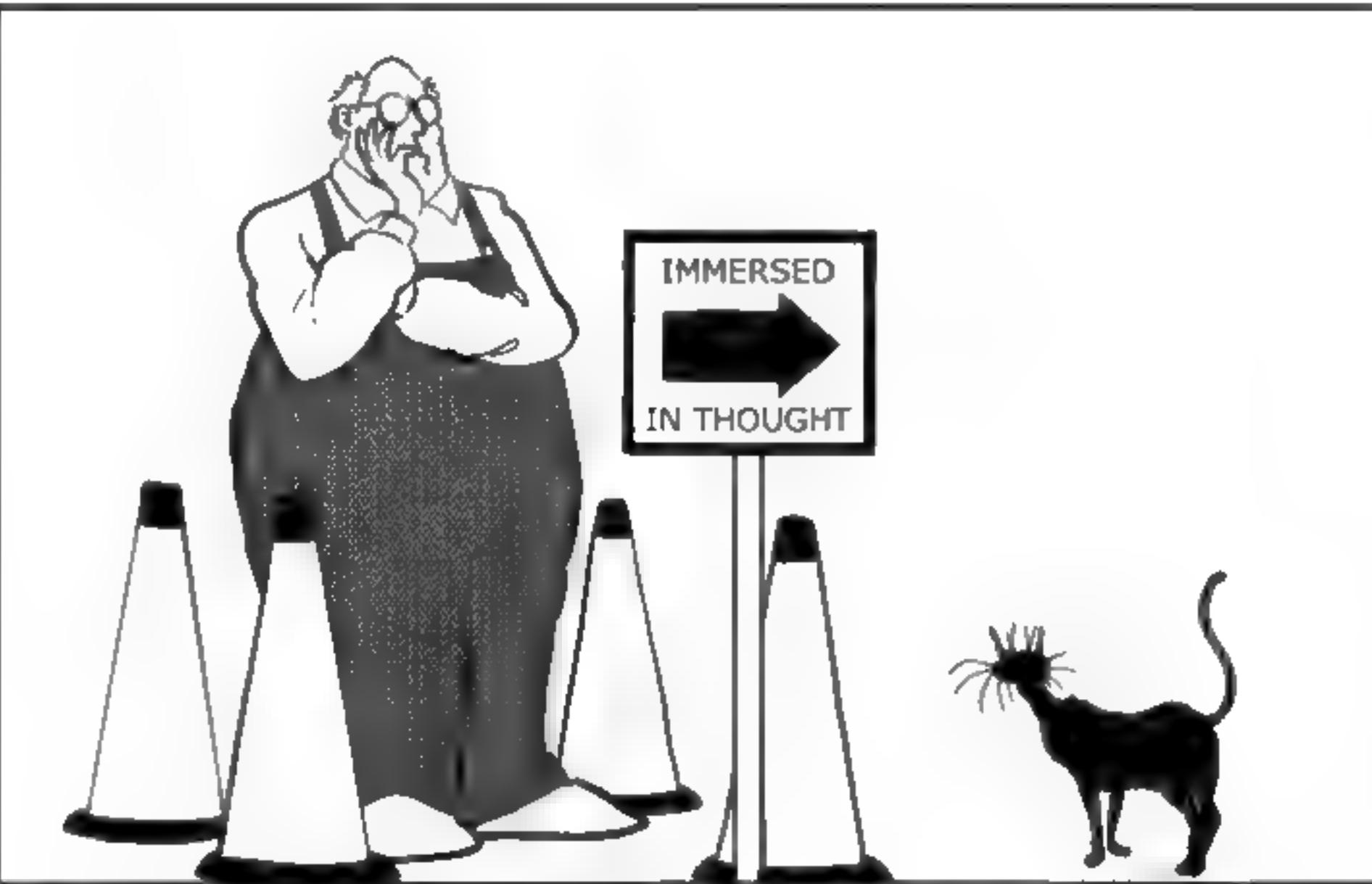


THE POOREST AMONG US
POSSESS HEARTS OF GOLD.
ONLY THE TRULY WEALTHY
CAN AFFORD A HEART
OF SCRAP METAL.





Brooke



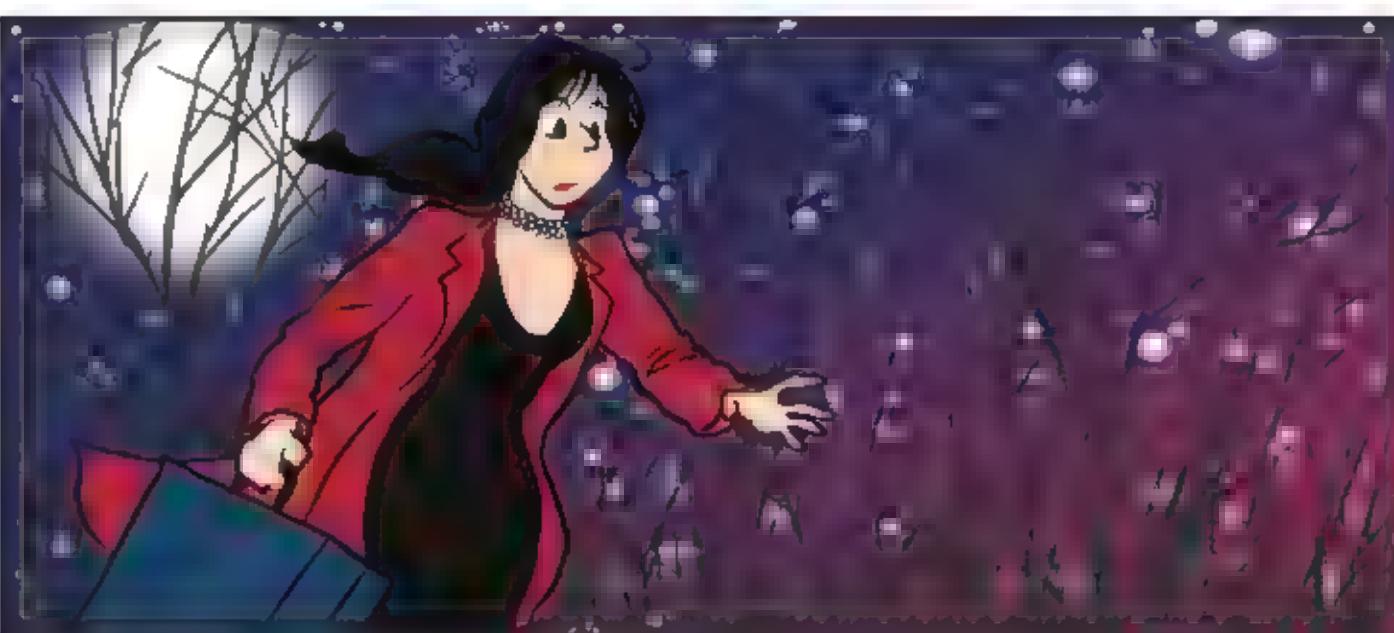
MEDITATIONS
OF
THORAX

Brooks

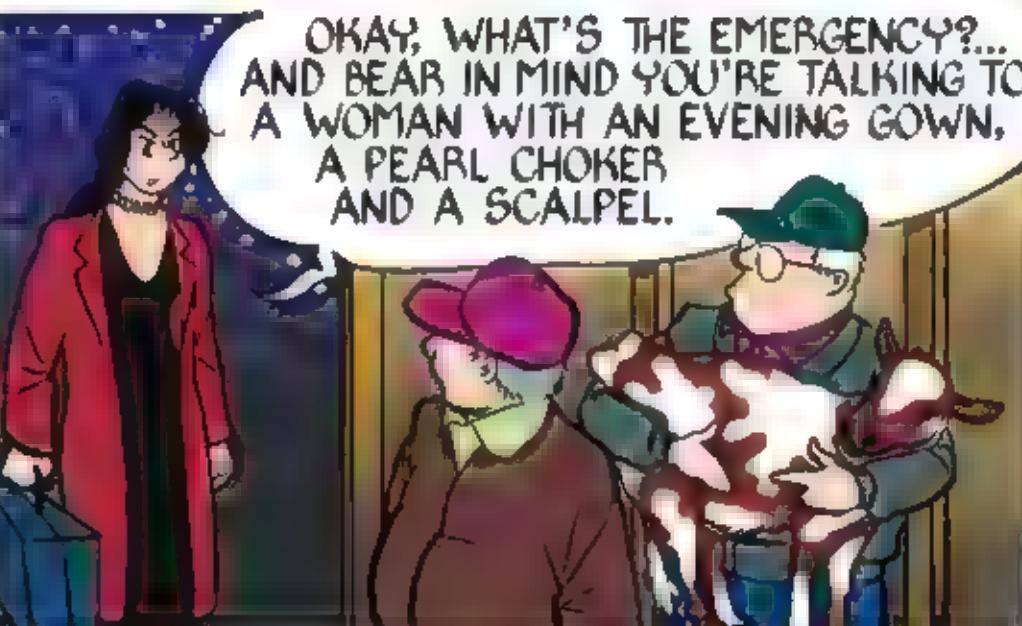


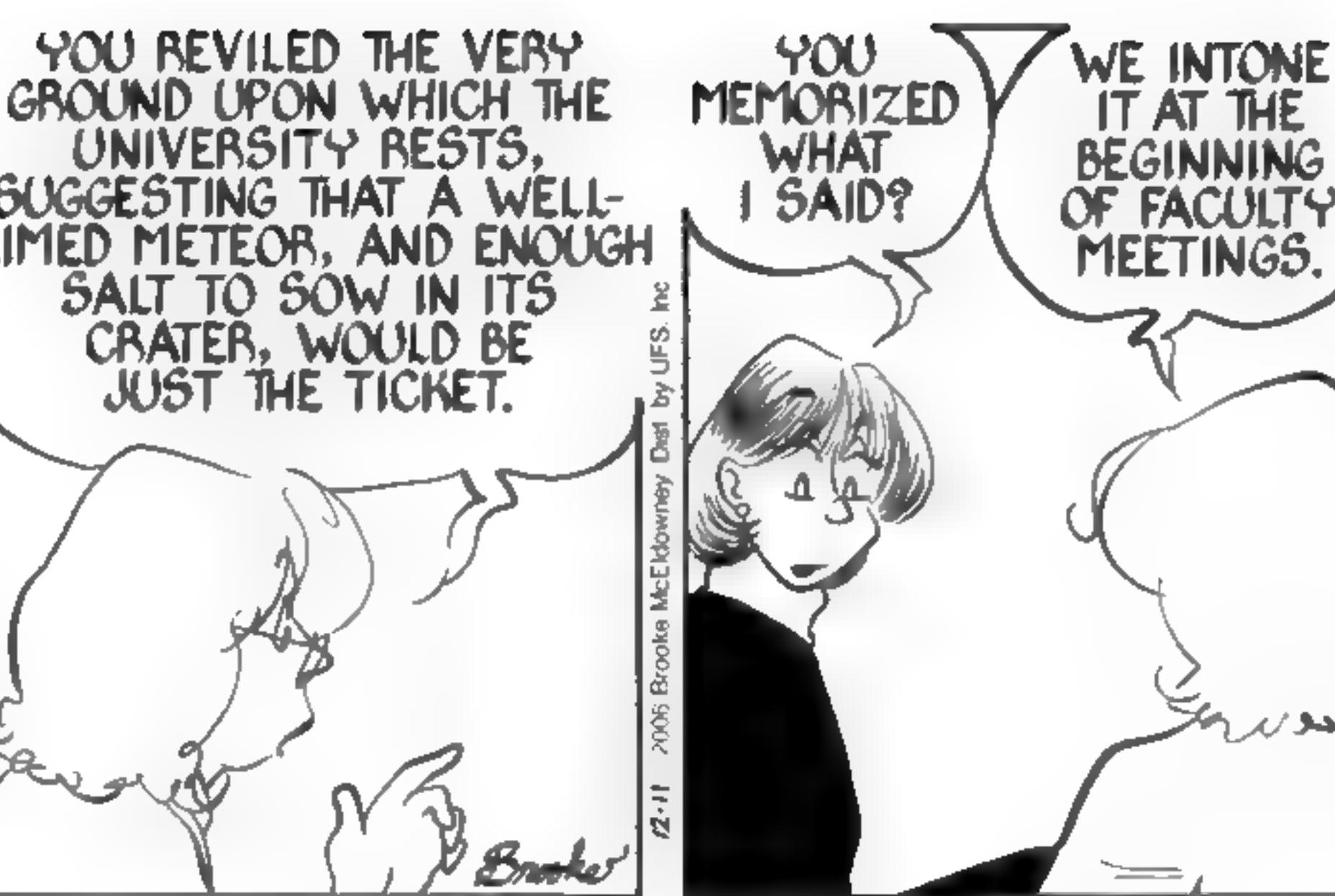
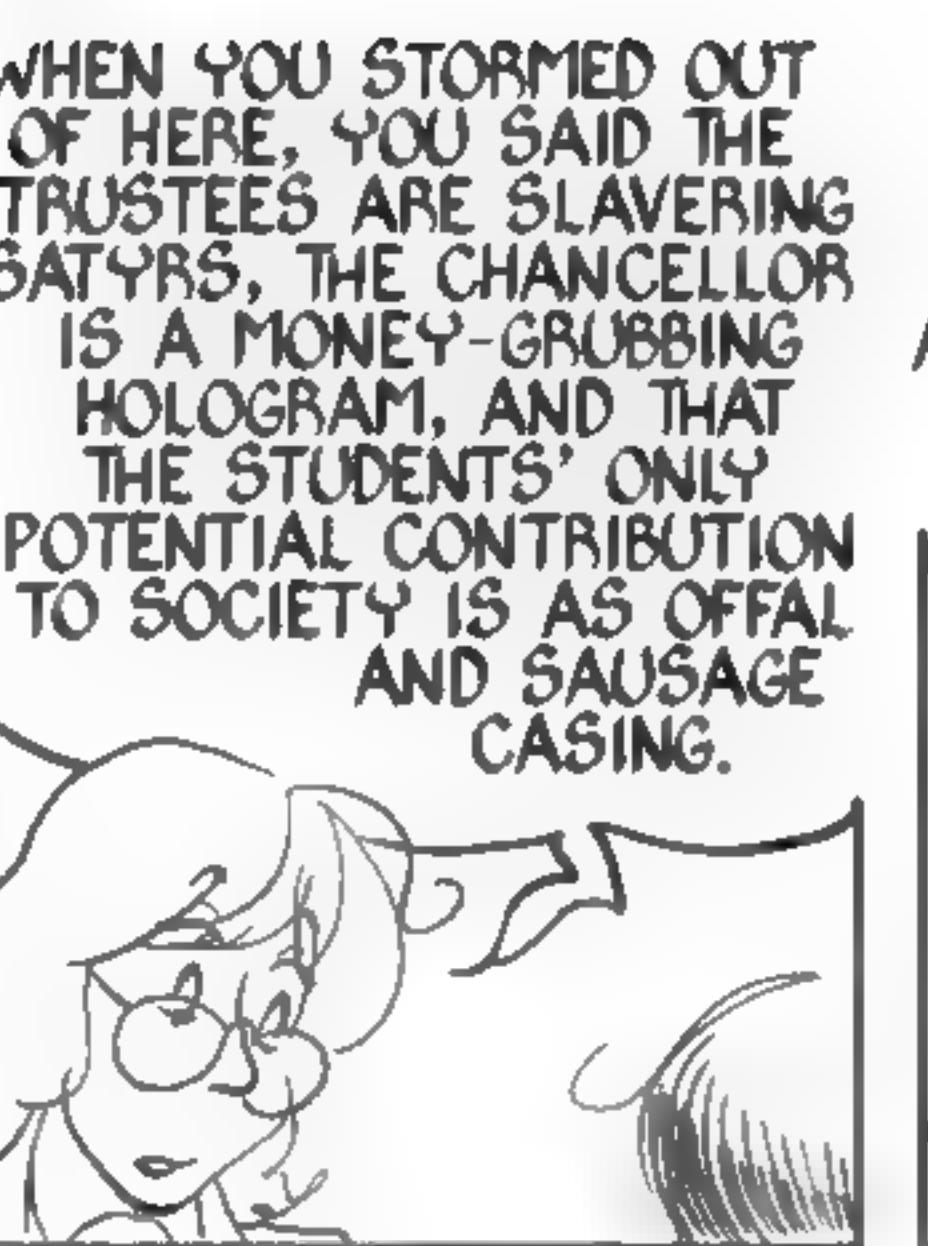
IN LIFE'S BATTLES,
CHARACTER IS THAT
RARE QUALITY
ATTRIBUTED TO
ANYONE WHO LOSES
BEFORE HE CAN SEIZE
THE OPPORTUNITY
TO COMPROMISE
HIS VALUES.





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WHY DO
YOU WANT
TO COME
BACK TO
TEACH?

I MET A
FORMER
STUDENT OF
MINE. SHE'S
NOW A VET.
SHE SAYS SHE
OWES WHAT
SHE HAS BECOME
TO ME.

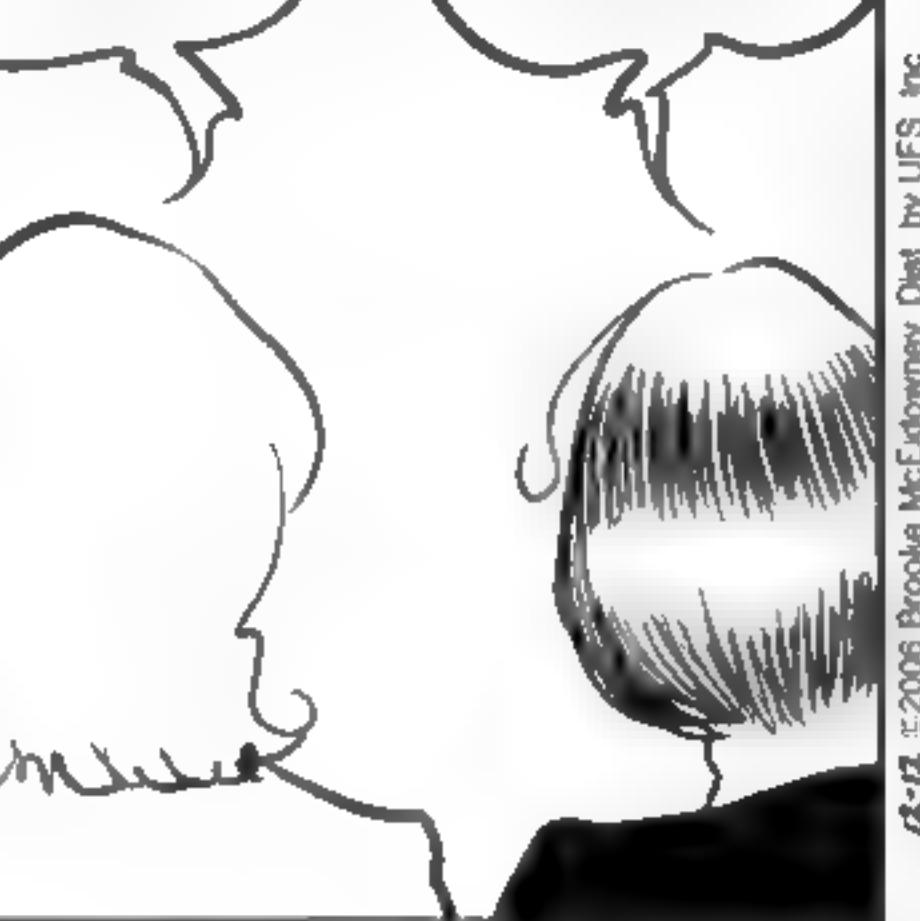


SHE SAYS I RAN ALL OVER
SUBSTANDARD WORK WITH
HOBNAILED BOOTS, AND IT
MADE HER RISE TO THE
CHALLENGE. SHE MADE ME
REALIZE THAT, AFTER ALL,
I DID SOMETHING WORTH-
WHILE HERE.



AND YOU
WANT TO
DO IT
AGAIN?

I BROUGHT
ALONG MY
HOBNAILED
BOOTS.



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I'LL JUST
SAY YOU'RE
THE VISITING
PROFESSOR
FROM HELL.

I ALREADY
FEEL AT
HOME





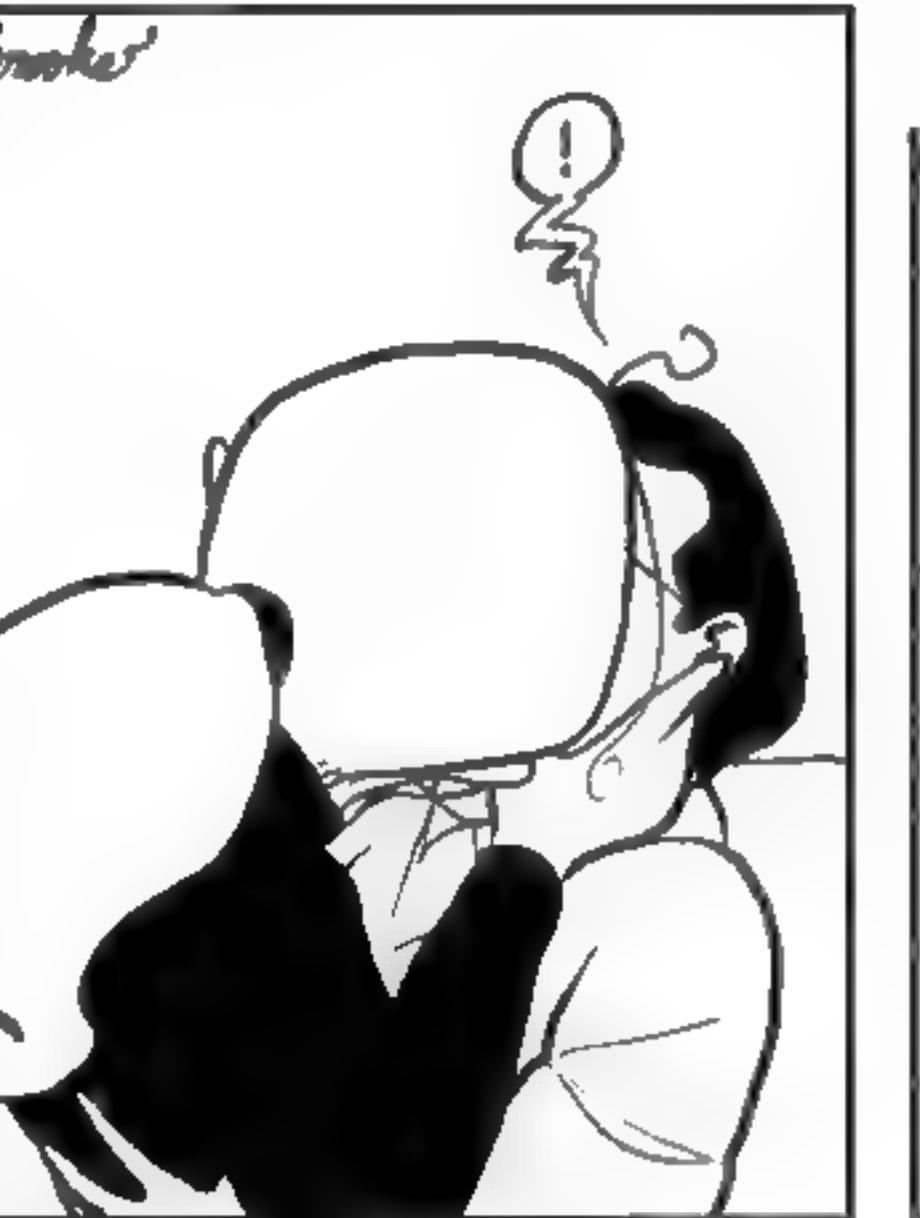


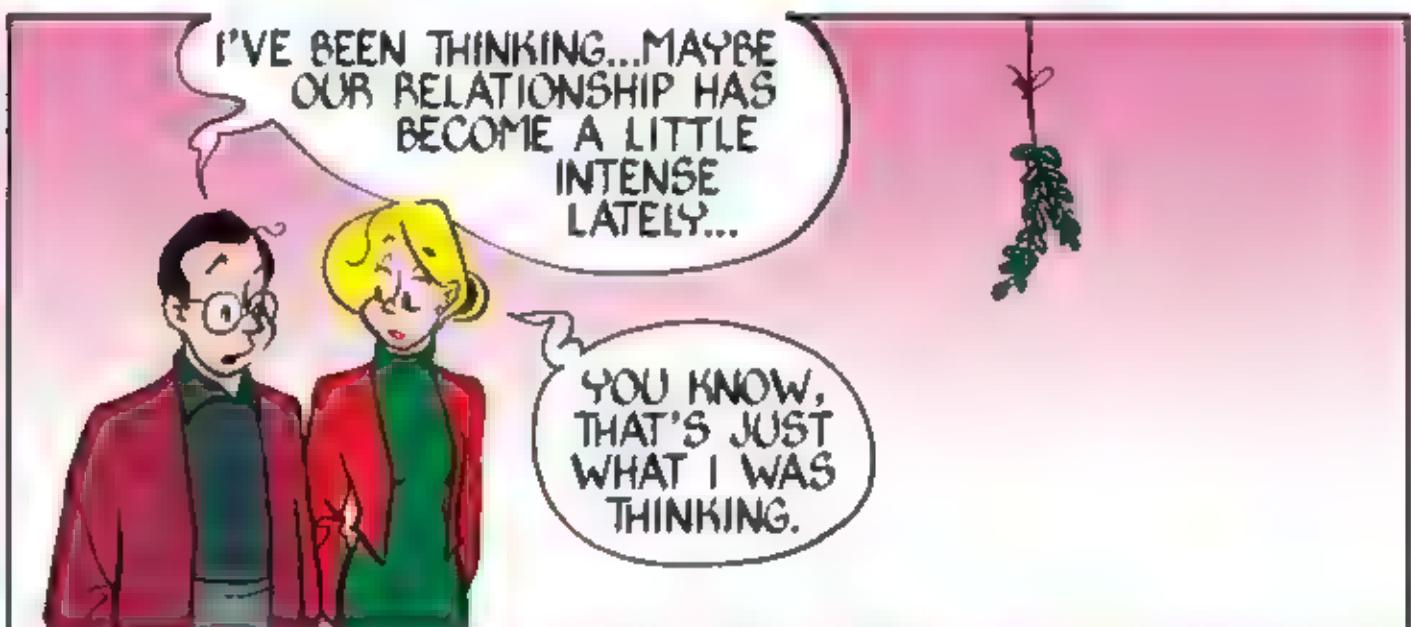
...COATING. AND I RECALL THAT YOUR LIPS KEPT MOVING AGAINST MINE, SORT OF AS IF YOU WERE TRYING TO SAY THE WORD "WOMBAT," OR "WOBSTAH WOLE"...OR MAYBE IT WAS "WIMBAWAH."



I COULDN'T ASCERTAIN WHICH, AND THE GENERAL LIP DAMPNESS OBSCURED ANY CLARITY...AT WHICH POINT IT HIT ME — YOU MIGHT JUST BE KISSING ME. THUS, NOTWITHSTANDING THAT EARLIER ANNELID SIMILE ACCOMPANIED BY A DISTINCT QUEASINESS, I BEGAN TO SUSPECT AFFECTIONATE UNDERTONES. STILL, THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT YOU COULD POSSIBLY MEAN BY "WIMBAWAH"...

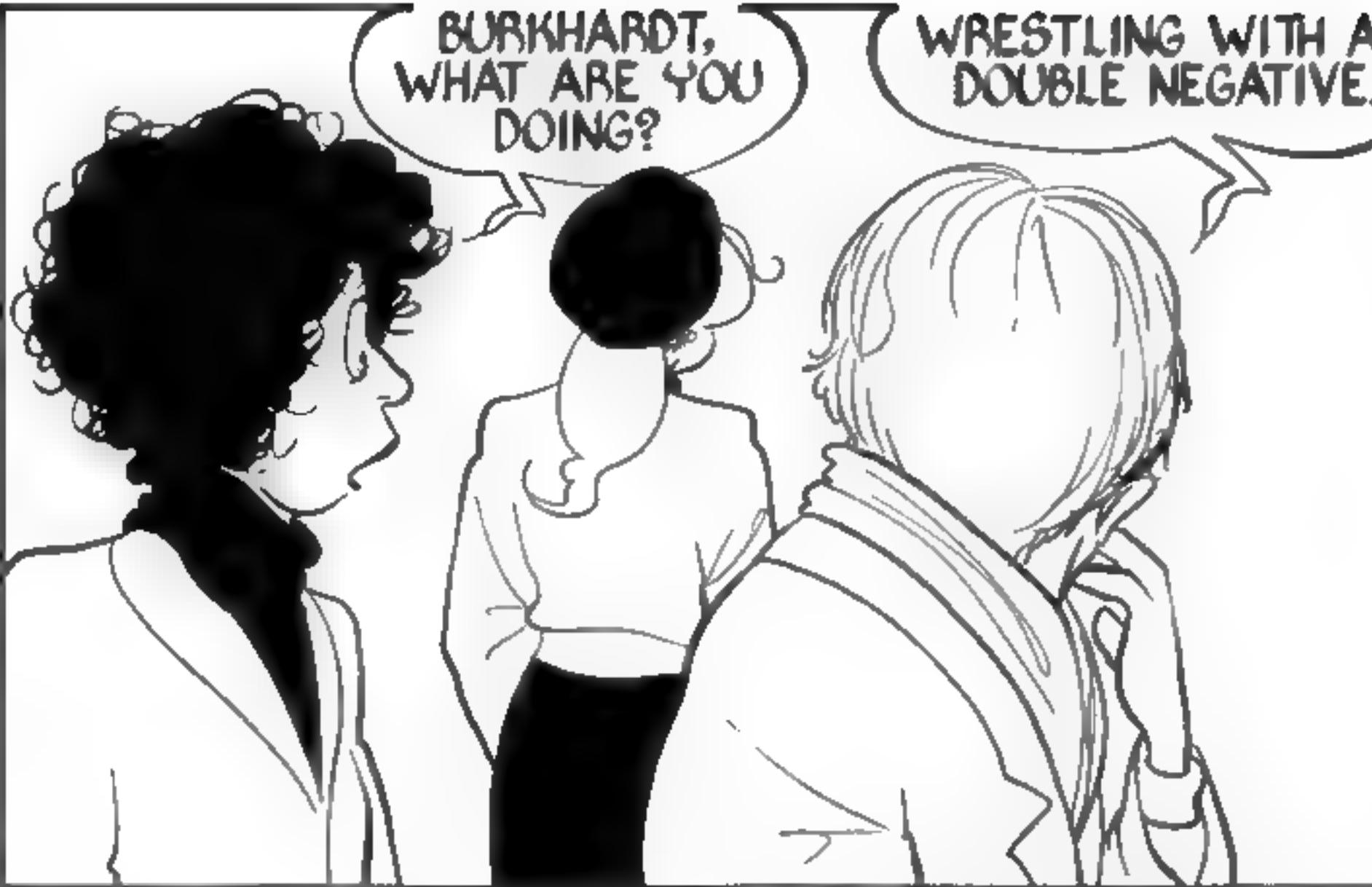








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TELL ME...YOU AND EDDA...
YOU'VE BEEN...CLOSE, IF
YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.
IS SHE...YOU
KNOW...

IS SHE...
...WHAT?



YOU KNOW...THE TWO OF
YOU...WHEN YOU GET
TOGETHER...DOES SHE...
...YOU KNOW...?



I HAVEN'T THE SLIGHTEST
IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TRYING
TO GET AT...AND YOUR
GESTURES COMPLETELY
ELUDE ME.



I'M SORRY.
ENGLISH IS
NOT MY
FIRST
LANGUAGE.



NO...
NITWIT
IS.



Brooke

LISTEN, AMOS...I'M TRYING
TO PUT THIS AS DELICATELY AS
I CAN. YOU'VE KNOWN EDDA
A LONG TIME. WHEN YOU'RE
TOGETHER...
...IS SHE...
...YOU
KNOW...



SHE IS MY FRIEND, MY
SOULMATE AND THE LOVE
OF MY LIFE. IS THAT
WHAT YOU MEAN?



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OH, WELL
NOW YOU'RE
JUST BEING
DISGUSTING.

I TRIED TO
TALK TO
AMOS
TODAY.

Brooks

WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME
FOR? YOU TALK ABOUT
SEX TO THE
EXCLUSION OF
EVERYTHING
ELSE, AND
AMOS STILL
REFERS TO
IT AS
GENDER.

YOU
CONJUGATE...
...HE DECLINES.

YOU'RE GETTING
ME HOT.

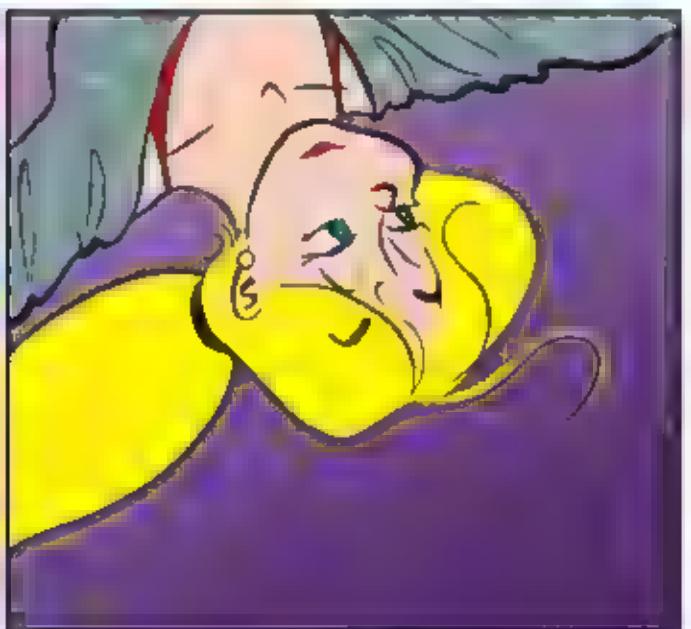
PUNC-
TUATION
MARKS
GET YOU
HOT.

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12.25 2006 JAKOB MELKOMYAN By U.S. ne

SO, WHAT'S
NEW?



WELL, FOR ME ANYWAY,
JESUS CHRIST, THE SON
OF GOD AND SAVIOR OF
MANKIND WAS BORN.



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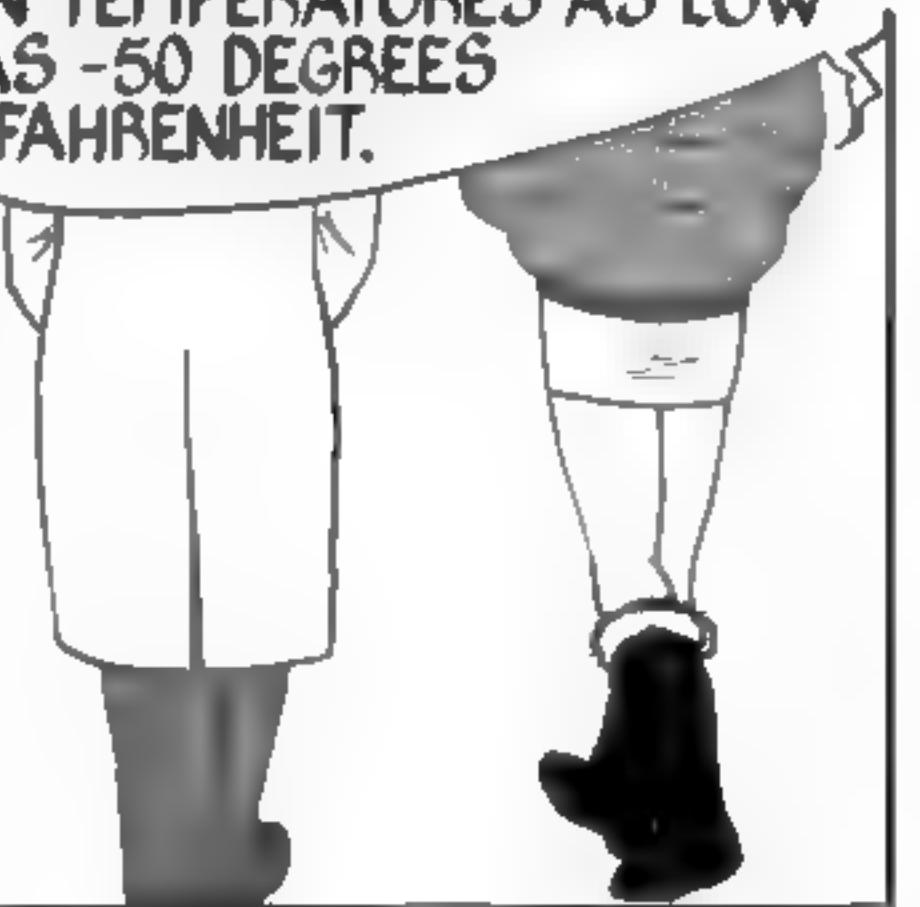
THAT WAS
YESTERDAY.



I GOT THIS FOR CHRISTMAS.
IT'S PACKED WITH A SYN-
THETIC INSULATION THAT
SIMULATES GOOSE DOWN.



MY HAT IS SNOW-PROOF
AND KEEPS MY EARS
ABSOLUTELY TOASTY. AND
THE BOOTS WARM MY FEET
IN TEMPERATURES AS LOW
AS -50 DEGREES
FAHRENHEIT.



WHY DO YOU
WEAR THE
MINISKIRT?



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I'M A LITTLE WORRIED
ABOUT EDDA'S SELF-
IMAGE. SHE JUST TOLD
ME THAT SHE HAS
SEXY KNEES.

WHY DOES
THAT GIVE
YOU PAUSE?

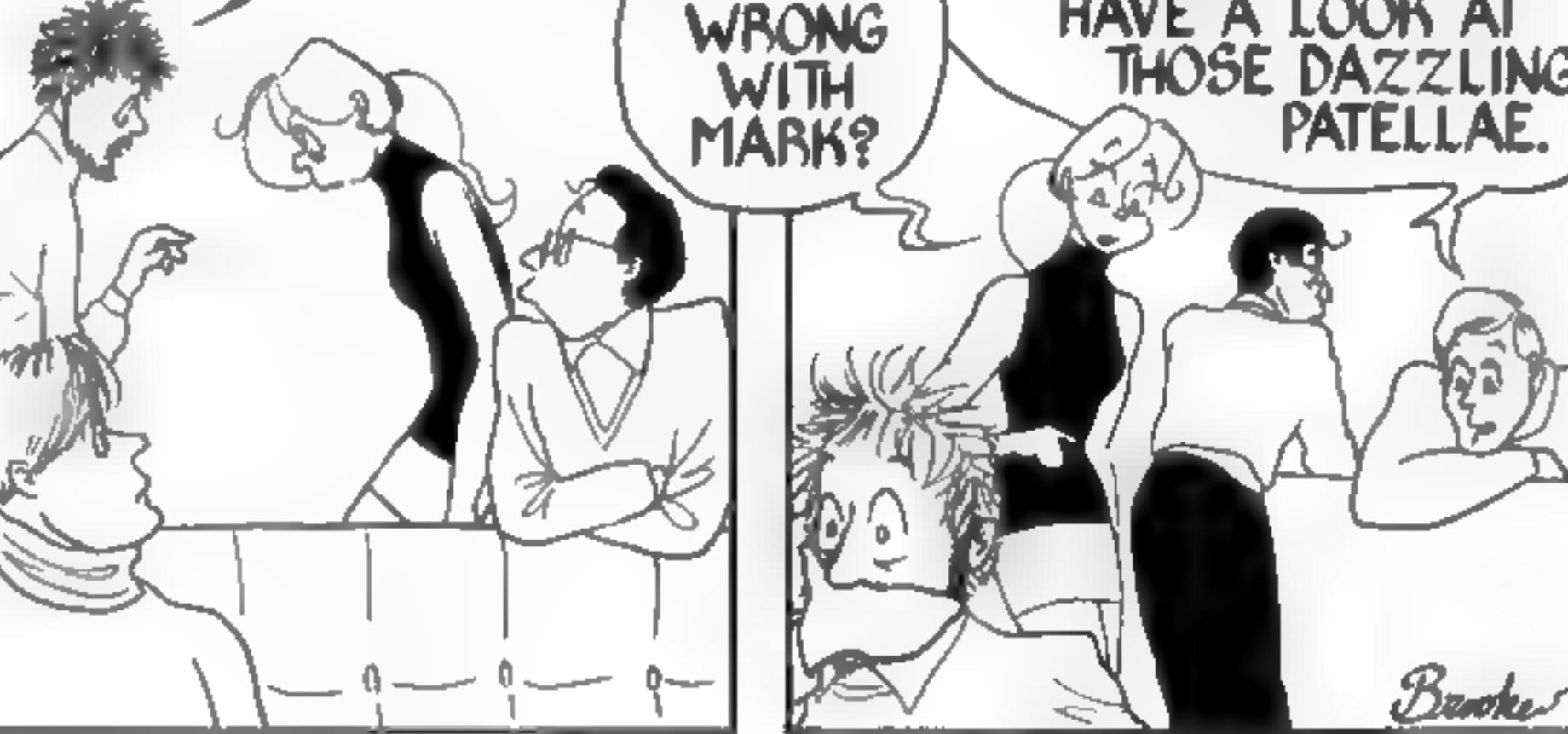
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IT'S SO SUPERFICIAL.
OF ALL EDDA'S QUALITIES,
WHY CONCENTRATE ON
ONE TRAIT THAT NO ONE
ELSE WOULD NOTICE
OR CARE ABOUT?



EDDA, DOLL...SIZZLING
KNEES! LORD, IF I WEREN'T
GAY, I'D SO WANT TO...

WHAT'S
WRONG
WITH
MARK?



Brooks

HE TURNED HIS OWN
STOMACH...THAT HAPPENS
EVERY TIME HE HAS
A STRAIGHT FANTASY.
COME HERE AND LET'S
HAVE A LOOK AT
THOSE DAZZLING
PATELLAE.

THIS NOTION
THAT YOU
HAVE SEXY
KNEES...IT
TROUBLES
ME.

WHY?

IT'S SO SUPERFICIAL.
THEY'RE JUST
KNEES.

PLAIN,
SIMPLE,
FUNCTIONAL,
...SUPPLE,
GENTLY
SCULPTED,
TOOTH-
SOME,
ALLURING...

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Brooke

BUT IT'S
SO CUTE
WHEN YOU
KNEEL.

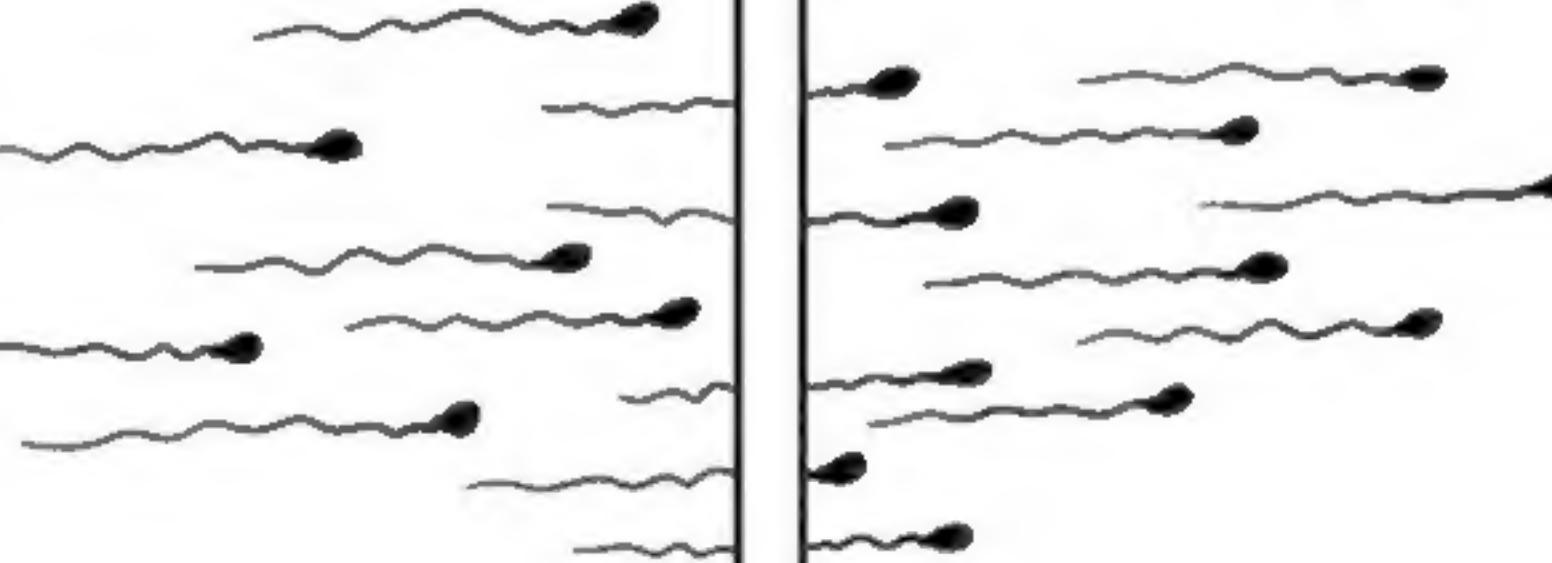
ORDINARILY,
I DON'T
HYPERVENTILATE
AFTER
GENITAL
ADJECTIVES.

Spermatozoon



Brooker

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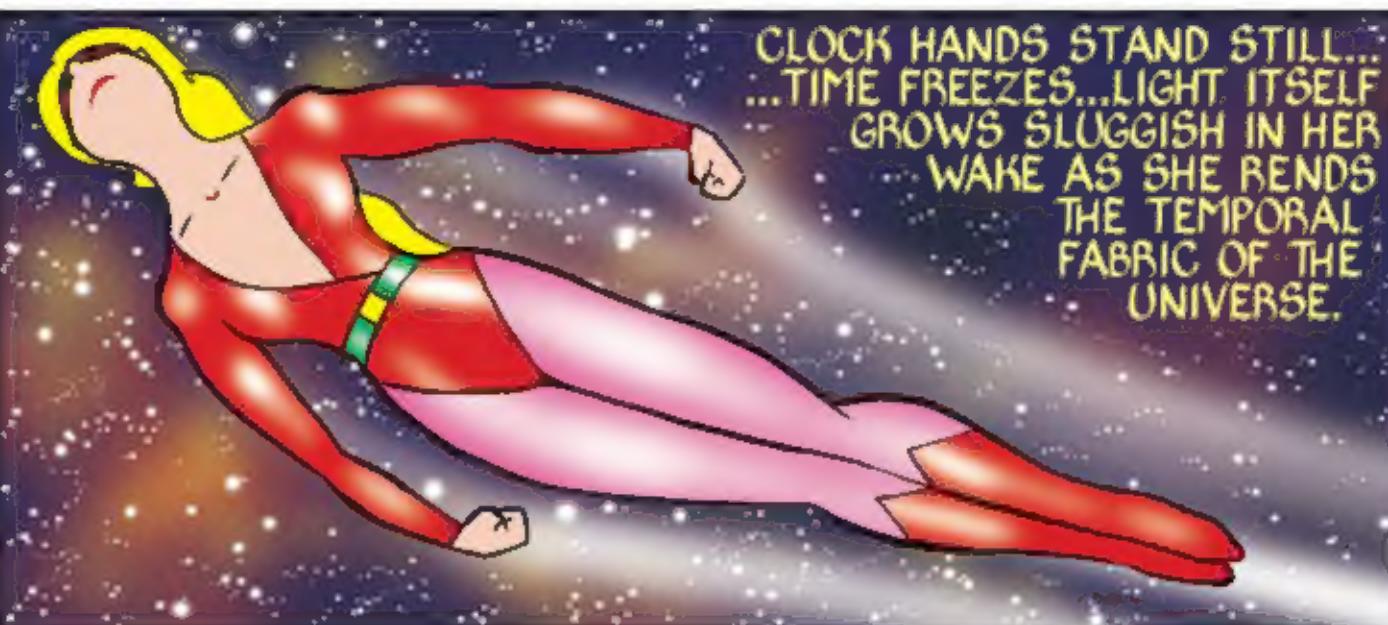


Spermatozoon
motorcycle gang
terrorizing a small
town

I FOUND IT
IN MY OLD
BIOLOGY
NOTES FROM
SCHOOL.

SISTER
CALIGULA
WAS SO
HAPPY
WHEN
YOU
GRADUATED
EARLY.





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